



# Notes from the Chief

*What I'm working on for You*



Osiyo -

There is no better education than first-hand experience and Cherokee Nation's Remember the Removal Ride program is one of the most successful educational programs we have.

Each summer a group of young people from Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in Cherokee, North Carolina, team up and retrace on bicycle the Trail of Tears, our ancestors' removal route from our homelands in the east to modern-day Oklahoma. This is a significant year, as we commemorate the 180th anniversary of the Trail of Tears.

This a special group of young people who will retrace our tribe's route to Oklahoma. The Remember the Removal effort enables some of Cherokee Nation's strongest emerging leaders to participate in a unique event that is focused on individual growth, teamwork development and, most importantly, sharing Cherokee history and heritage.

This is the best classroom I could ever imagine. Riders make stops at museums, gravesites, national parks, churches and other historic sites along the way. The experience reshapes how these young people view life and their heritage. The riders travel about 60 miles per day over a three-week period and pass through seven states: Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

It is a grueling journey on a bike, but the struggles on the ride offer greater understanding of what our ancestors experienced along the Trail 180 years ago. An estimated 16,000 Cherokees were forced to make the journey on the Trail of Tears to Indian Territory and more than 4,000 died from exposure, starvation and disease.

Remember the Removal ensures our future leaders don't forget the past and always honor the sacrifices our ancestors made. Our riders serve as ambassadors along the road in the towns they ride

through. Since this program was started in the mid-1980s, every participant has dug deep to find untapped reservoirs of strength and perseverance.

They ride every day and with every mile, they learn more about the Cherokee experience in America and the true history of our people. We are here today, as the largest tribal government in the country, because of that fortitude.

We try to make the ride as public as possible so that followers back home can follow along on social media. Photos and blog posts are updated daily to the Remember the Removal Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/removal.ride](http://www.facebook.com/removal.ride) and on Cherokee Nation's website at <http://remembertheremoval.cherokee.org>.

Also, follow along on Twitter and Instagram by searching for the hashtags #RTR2018 and #WeRemember.

The 2018 Remember the Removal cyclists are:

- Emilee Chavez, 18, Tahlequah, Sequoyah High School
- Daulton Cochran, 21, Bell, Tulsa Community College
- Courtney Cowan, 24, Kansas, Northeastern State University graduate
- Lily Drywater, 21, Tahlequah, Northeastern State University
- Dale Eagle, 23, Tahlequah, Tahlequah High School graduate
- Jennifer Johnson, 48, Oklahoma City, mentor Rider
- Autumn Lawless, 22, Porum, Northeastern State University
- Amari McCoy, 21, Sallisaw, Carl Albert State College
- Parker Weavel, 21, Tahlequah, Northeastern State University
- Sky Wildcat, 22, Tahlequah, Northeastern State University

Wado

Bill John Baker



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