



# Notes from the Chief

*What I'm working on for You*



Osiyo -

The Indian Women's Pocahontas Club is Oklahoma's oldest, continuous chartered club. Established in the summer of 1899 at Oowala, in the Cooweescoowee District of the Cherokee Nation in Indian Territory, it began as a 'past-time club' for Native women returning home in the summers from seminaries and colleges. Today, the club remains active in cultural preservation and community service. Based in Claremore, the membership's dedication to Cherokee and local history is inspiring and commendable. More than a century since its inception, the women of the Pocahontas Club still gather to preserve Cherokee values.

Over the past 119 years, members of the Pocahontas Club have witnessed some of the most significant events in our tribe's history, from the Dawes Act and allotment era to Oklahoma statehood and the resurgence in Cherokee patriotism and pride. One of their most famous members was renowned Cherokee writer and political pundit Will Rogers. Although men are no longer allowed as members, the club honors his memory by placing a wreath at his tomb on his birthday each year.

The Pocahontas Club has more than 150 members, all of whom are Cherokee. Club members serve as valuable caretakers of our culture, our heritage and our communities. The club's primary mission is to maintain our Cherokee culture, coupled with a focus on supporting public education and community service. Toward that end, they offer higher education scholarships for Cherokee students and support the Boys and Girls Club of Chelsea with an art program.

The Cherokee Heritage Center in Tahlequah is opening a new exhibit, "Cherokee Recollections: The Pocahontas Club," celebrating the group's history. It will run through August with a special reception planned for June 19 at 6:30 p.m. That reception is free and open to the public and will appropriately be held at the Adams Corner rural village that depicts Cherokee life in the 1890s before Oklahoma statehood. I hope everyone who can will take time to visit the Cherokee Heritage Center over the

summer and learn about their contributions to the preservation of Cherokee history and heritage.

The Pocahontas Club and its members continue to play a vital role within the Cherokee Nation. Their efforts allow us to better preserve and share our tribal history with future generations.

For more information about the Indian Women's Pocahontas Club, visit [www.indianwpc.org](http://www.indianwpc.org).

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