

FEB 2025

# THE SHAWNEE JOURNAL



SKIPIYEKIISFWA  
*"sap/maple month"*

# YA'SASILAWIYAKWE

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TO VIEW ALL UPCOMING EVENTS, OFFICE CLOSURES, AND MORE, VISIT [SHAWNEE-NSN.GOV/CALENDAR](http://SHAWNEE-NSN.GOV/CALENDAR) ONLINE OR SCAN HERE WITH YOUR PHONE:



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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Recognizing that digital communications via social media and the Internet are not necessarily preferred by or accessible to every tribal citizen, the Communications & Media Department will always strive to introduce new citizens services & programs through this publication or other direct mailings to all Shawnee households before they are broadcast online. Many opportunities for tribal citizens may arise between publications, however, particularly those coordinated with other tribes and third-party organizations. Those who can are encouraged to follow the tribe's digital channels for the most up-to-date information—primarily the tribal website ([shawnee-nsn.gov](http://shawnee-nsn.gov)) and monthly e-mail newsletter, "piyeetaacimooweneefa."

## KNOW ANY SHAWNEES WHO'VE MOVED RECENTLY?

Let them know to update their mailing address with the Citizen Enrollment Department to ensure they continue receiving tribal news!

## SIGN UP TO RECEIVE PIYEETAACIMOOWENEFA "LITTLE NEWS MESSAGES"

Get Shawnee Tribe news updates on the first Friday of every month. Subscribe to the e-newsletter at [shawnee-nsn.gov/subscribe](http://shawnee-nsn.gov/subscribe) or scan this code with your smartphone's camera.



# KIWIITAMAAKONAAKI HOKIMAAKI

## MESSAGES FROM THE CHIEFS



**CHIEF  
BEN BARNES**

Dear tribal citizens,

Each month, Chief Roy and I use this quarterly update to inform you on the happenings within the tribe. This month as we begin a new calendar year, I think it would be appropriate to look ahead and talk about what is coming for 2025.

The Golden Mesa Casino expansion is nearing the halfway point in its construction. Barring any bad weather, we still anticipate a Summer 2025 grand opening of the new hotel, expanded casino, and RV Park. Anticipating the additional revenue and the accompanying compliance workload, the tribe acquired new offices for Otis Hughes, our Executive Director of the Gaming Commission, and his team of gaming regulators. We are all very excited about the new potential of these expanded operations. Our "Shawnee Development Corp" has done a tremendous job in seeing this project through. I cannot thank Chris Floyd, President of Shawnee Development, LLC, and the rest of the Shawnee Development Board enough for their efforts. They will also be bringing some big news to the tribe later this year. Not only are they working towards hiring their first employee to oversee non-gaming operations, but they have plans to enter the federal contracting arena in 2025-26. Big things are coming on all fronts at the tribe.

Likewise on the government side, we too are looking downrange into 2026 and beyond and are preparing ourselves for future success. We will be bringing more of our accounting workload "in house" rather than relying on third-party vendors to provide those services. This will increase the number of employees that we have at the tribe.

48% of the Shawnee Tribe's workforce consists of individuals with tribal affiliations. Among this demographic, 52% are citizens of the Shawnee, Absentee Shawnee, or Eastern Shawnee tribes. (January 2025)

Lastly, you will find a new feature in this journal. This Christmas and New Year season was difficult for some of our Shawnee families. Some lost loved ones, and others are feeling the absence of those lost during the year. One of our families, the family of our former Chairman, James R. Squirrel, lost a special loved one over the holidays. Losing a family member during the holidays is always bitter, but especially when they are young and it is unexpected. Chelsea Cavener is the daughter of Dax and Diana (Squirrel) Cavener and the granddaughter of James and Gaylene Squirrel. It is in her honor that we begin a special section of the journal, "In Memoriam," where we remember those that we have lost throughout the year.

hiini leki,



**Ben Barnes  
Chief**



**SECOND CHIEF  
ROY  
BALDRIDGE**

hato caaki wiyeefa (Hello, everyone)–

I would like to first introduce everyone to the new year. This year will bring many changes for our tribe and country. During last year's federal elections, we witnessed a change in the president's office and many seats in Congress. As a result, we can expect many changes in policies and procedures that will have a daily effect upon our lives. As with any change in policies, we will have to adjust to the ripple effects that can affect the abilities of our families and our communities.

During times like these, smaller tribes such as ours are at a disadvantage. We do not have the financial or physical resources to actively lobby and educate new politicians on our problems and needs. In the case of our tribe, in the past and today, we participate in organizations that allow us to gain access to local, state and federal entities we could not afford on our own. Organizations such as the National Congress of American Indians, United Indian Nations of Oklahoma and the Native American Finance Officers Association. These organizations give us a voice in Oklahoma City and Washington, D.C. They give us an opportunity to meet face-to-face with the politicians who represent us when threats to tribal sovereignty arise, such as attempts to remove tribal protections provided by the Indian Child Welfare Act and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

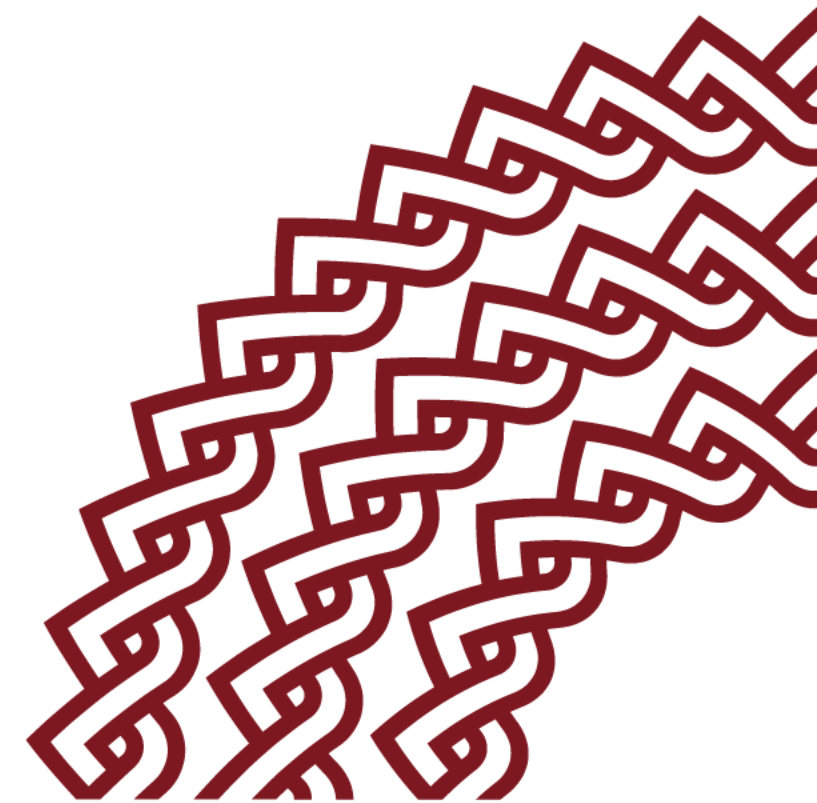
Locally, our tribes belong to the Intertribal Council of Northeastern Oklahoma. The member tribes—Eastern Shawnee, Modoc, Peoria, Miami, Ottawa, Quapaw, Seneca-Cayuga and Wyandotte—welcomed our tribe to join them because of the relationship they shared with then-Chief Ron Sparkman. On the state level, our current Chief, Ben Barnes, holds the position of Chairperson of the United Indian Nations of Oklahoma.

Why do these relationships matter? In the past, these relationships were responsible for paving the way for our tribe's growth. Our relationships provided support when we were forced to sue the federal government and now when we face issues such as compact disagreements that occur from time to time.

Our tribe has been blessed in the past, today, and hopefully in the future as we work to build our community. We will continue to face challenges this year because they [challenges] are a part of living. It is my hope that this year, we will see many things that we can all be proud of, such as the completion of our Guymon project, the expansion of our language program and taking the time to recognize all our ancestors who have played a part in making this possible, as well as those people who today contribute to our community, whether artist or entrepreneurs. niyaawe (thank you),



**Roy D. Baldrige  
Second Chief**



### THE SHAWNEE TRIBE BUSINESS COUNCIL



**SECRETARY  
CAROLYN  
FOSTER**



**TREASURER  
MARK  
McDOWELL**



**SEAT 1  
JOHN  
SPARKMAN**



**SEAT 2  
DIANA  
McLEAN**



**SEAT 3  
DREW  
DIXON**



**SEAT 4  
COREY  
WINESBURG**



**SEAT 5  
MONTY  
COOMBES**



**SEAT 6  
LEE  
BLUEJACKET**



**SEAT 7  
KENI  
HOOD**



# HOLIDAY SEASON PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Santa came early for the kiddos in the tribe's CCDF service area. The big man himself worked closely with the Child Care Development Fund team to host the Drive-Thru Christmas event in early December. Kids received personalized gifts, sweet treats, and Christmas hams for their families' holiday tables. niyaawe, Santa & crew! To learn more about CCDF, visit [shawnee-nsn.gov/ccdf](http://shawnee-nsn.gov/ccdf).



Following the CCDF Christmas Drive-Thru, the Shawnee Tribe Living Languages Grant Program hosted *pepooni hatfo'keewe* ("telling winter stories") at the Shawnee Language House. Dozens of tribal citizens and community members gathered for a chili supper and to listen to stories told by language mentors and apprentices. The language department is able to share these stories because, nearly a century ago, fluent Shawnee speakers shared them with Carl Voegelin, a linguist and anthropologist from the University of Indiana, during his fieldwork. To read more about these stories in *saawanwaatoweewe* (Shawnee language) and get a closer look at the original illustrations created for the event, check out the Language Corner on page 15.



MORE PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE





# SHAWNEE TRIBE TAG OFFICE NOW AN AUTHORIZED PIKEPASS AGENT

## NEW OKLAHOMA TOLL RATES IN EFFECT

The Shawnee Tribe Tag Office is now an authorized PIKEPASS agent. The most cost-effective way to travel Oklahoma's turnpikes, PIKEPASS can also be used on toll roads in Texas and Kansas, as well as certain toll roads in Florida and Colorado.

Since 2021, the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA) has been migrating all of Oklahoma's toll roads to cashless tolls, increasing motorist safety and leaving drivers with two convenient payment options: PlatePay or PIKEPASS.

Now that the process of converting Oklahoma toll roads to the PlatePay system is complete, OTA will begin invoicing drivers for any outstanding tolls from May 15, 2023, to date.

Tolls from that date forward will be subject to the new, increased rates that went into effect on January 1, unless the driver is a PIKEPASS customer. In many cases, PIKEPASS customers will pay nearly 50% less than drivers who opt to use the PlatePay system.

Shawnee Tribe tag agent Kim Jumper is available to assist any driver—Shawnees and non-Shawnees alike—with obtaining a PIKEPASS. Motorists can sign up for a PIKEPASS account online at [PIKEPASS.com](https://PIKEPASS.com), and, once registered, bring the confirmation number to the tag office to pick up the transponder and receive assistance installing it in the registered vehicle.

Motorists will need the following to open a PIKEPASS account:

1. Driver's License
2. Initial Payment must be paid by Credit / Debit card
3. License Plate or VIN Number, Plate Issuer, Year, Make & Model for each vehicle

The Shawnee Tribe Tag Office is located inside tribal headquarters at 29 S Highway 69A, and business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Contact Kim Jumper to set up an appointment by calling (918) 542-2441, ext. 102, or email [tags@shawnee-tribe.com](mailto:tags@shawnee-tribe.com).



# WEEMEYAKWE: WHERE WE COME FROM



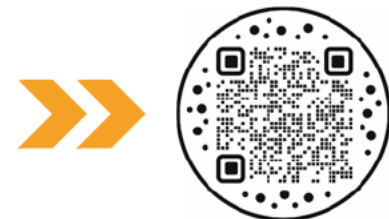
## FROM "THE OHIO COUNTRY" WEBPAGE:

THIS 12-EPIISODE SERIES PROVIDES A PERSPECTIVE ON THE HISTORY OF THE REGION WE NOW CALL OHIO THAT VERY FEW OF US LEARNED IN SCHOOL. IT PUTS THE EXPERIENCES OF MIAMI, SHAWNEE, WYANDOTTE, AND OTHER AMERICAN INDIAN PEOPLE AT THE CENTER OF A REFRESHED VERSION OF THE STATE'S COMPLICATED PAST AND UNDECIDED FUTURE.

THIS IN-DEPTH PODCAST FROM WYSO PUBLIC RADIO IS THE RESULT OF MORE THAN A YEAR OF REPORTING, MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT FROM OHIO HUMANITIES [OHIOHUMANITIES.ORG].

HOSTS: NEENAH ELLIS, CHRIS WELTER

Find "The Ohio Country" anywhere you can listen to podcasts, or listen online by scanning here:



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This podcast from WYSO is shared for informational purposes only. It does not constitute an endorsement of any opinions expressed in "The Ohio Country," nor does it verify the accuracy of the reported information. Photos provided courtesy of WYSO.



# RECORDING STUDIO RENOVATIONS AT SAAWANWAATOWEEWIKA

## 2K FOUNDATIONS SUPPORTING SHAWNEE LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

On February 3, tribal leaders and the Shawnee language team hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony unveiling a newly renovated recording studio at the Emma “Mock” Donaldson saawanwaatowewika (Shawnee language house). 2K Foundations, the charitable giving subsidiary of 2K Games, has provided generous support to renovate and fully equip the studio in celebration of the Shawnee Tribe’s involvement in the video game, Sid Meier’s *Civilization VII*, which is being released on February 11.

Keep an eye on [shawnee-nsn.gov](http://shawnee-nsn.gov) and social media later this month to view photos and video from the event.



## MAALAAKWAHI KE'NEEMEPE: LET'S LOOK CLOSER

# ADVANCING CULTURALLY INFORMED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

As part of the ongoing clinical research project, Kipiyecipakiciipe “Coming home,” Dr. Evan White, Principal Investigator at Laureate Institute for Brain Research (LIBR), and Dr. Deborah Jones-Saumty will be conducting a community readiness assessment regarding substance use intervention and prevention programming. The goal of the readiness assessment, or CRA, is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Shawnee tribal community’s current perspectives on substance use challenges and potential solutions, including the currently available resources.

“Community readiness assessment ensures that the potential solution-focused programming will not only belong to the Shawnee Tribe community but also be grounded in the community perspectives and integrate well with current efforts,” said Dr. White.

Community guidance is central to the Kipiyecipakiciipe research project, which seeks to use modern clinical neuroscience to investigate how involvement in traditional Shawnee ways of life impacts the brain and might promote substance use recovery or prevention.

“The overall project also includes a brain scanning protocol at LIBR that will provide a foundation of translational neuroscience data to support future substance use intervention and prevention programs,” continued Dr. White. “Therefore, the CRA and MRI protocols that make up Phase 2 of this project happening in parallel can both inform Phase 3, which will explore how the information gained to that point applies for individuals impacted by substance use disorders.”

The community readiness assessment will also provide helpful information to guide future resource development and include capacity-building training for Shawnee Tribe staff, including the behavioral health team.

“It is a privilege to be able to work with Dr. White and his team,” said Tauna Warner, Shawnee Tribe’s director of behavioral health & victim services. “We are anticipating that findings from this study will enhance our capabilities of working with Shawnee citizens.”

More information about the community readiness assessment and future updates about Kipiyecipakiciipe “Coming home” will be communicated through the tribe’s news channels. Inquiries may be directed to Danielle Bethel, LIBR research coordinator, at [dbethel@libr.org](mailto:dbethel@libr.org).

### *Acknowledgement of NIH award support:*

This project supported by the National Institute On Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number DP1DA058986 (PI: White). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.



# GRADUATION REGALIA AND 2025 HONOR BANQUET

## ATTENTION ALL SHAWNEE GRADS!

Please complete the online application form by Tuesday, April 15, to request your regalia for Spring or Summer 2025 commencement ceremonies.

Scan here with your smartphone or visit [shawnee-nsn.gov/grads](http://shawnee-nsn.gov/grads).



## 2025 HONOR BANQUET



SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 2025 AT 5:00 PM  
SHAWNEE TRIBE COMMUNITY BUILDING  
108 S. EIGHT TRIBES TRAIL  
MIAMI, OK 74354

Celebrating the achievements of the Class of 2024 (Fall/Winter) and the Class of 2025 (Spring/Summer).  
Please RSVP no later than Friday, May 9, 2025.

Scan here with your smartphone or visit [shawnee-nsn.gov/grads](http://shawnee-nsn.gov/grads).

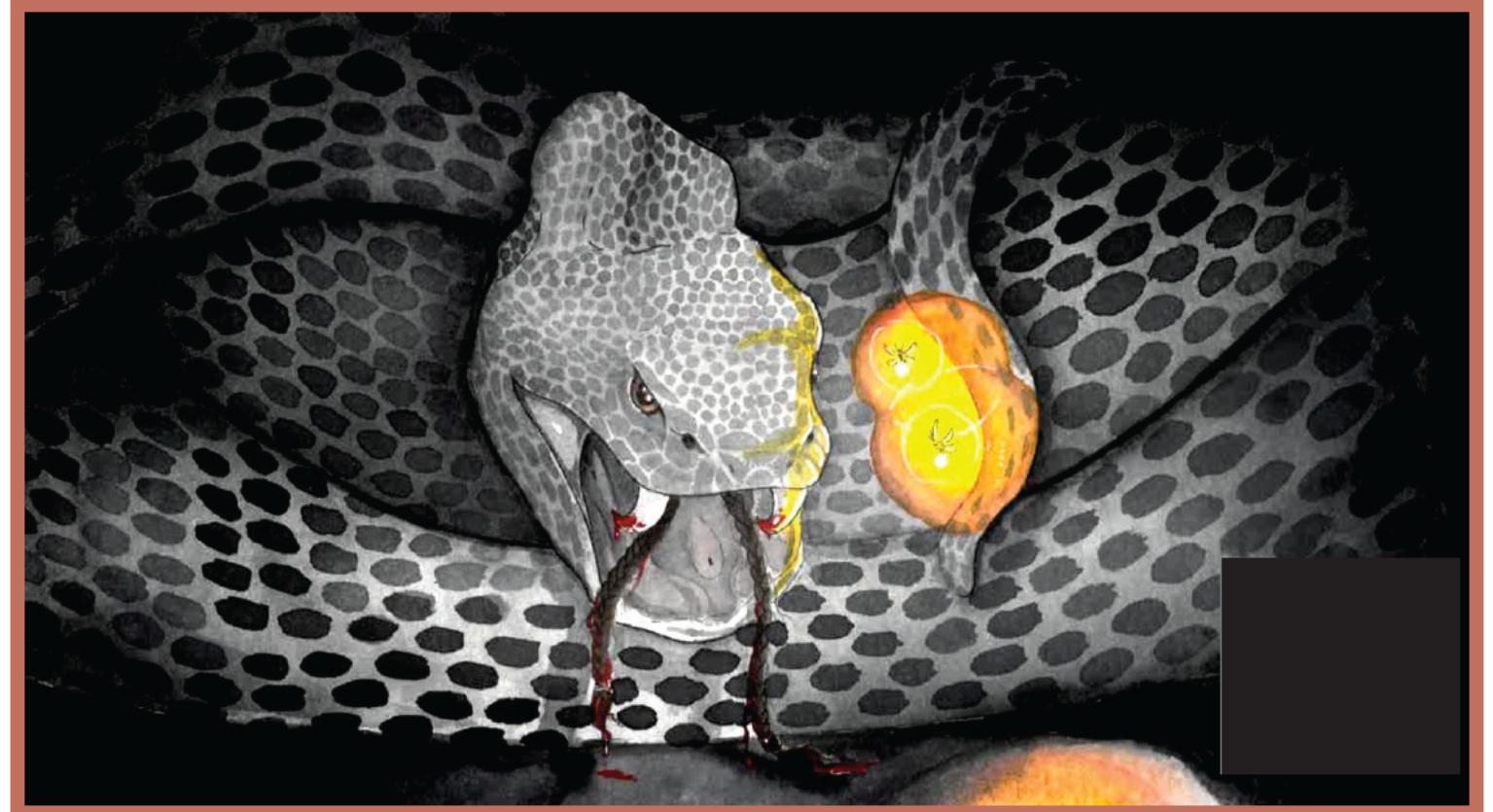


Questions? Contact Ella Kohler at [education@shawnee-tribe.com](mailto:education@shawnee-tribe.com) or (918) 542-2441, ext. 133.

# TA'SAAWANWAATOWEEYAKWE:

## THE LANGUAGE CORNER / "WHERE WE SPEAK SHAWNEE"

Below are the illustrations and a little more about the winter stories we told each other in December. Scan the QR codes with your phone to hear each story – please note that you may need to close your YouTube app or web browser between each scan.



Shawnees don't tell winter stories in the summer. Listen to Daniel Citty tell the story called "Winter Story." Then you'll know why we don't tell winter stories in the summer.

Bailey Quishenberry drew this illustration called "Winter Story."





Listen to Mikala Hill and Mason Hudson tell the story called Turkey and Fox. You'll learn how Fox tried to eat Turkey.

*Purrault Peralta drew this illustration called "Turkey and Fox."*



Listen to Margaret Sewell and Joel Barnes tell the story called Seven Stars. You'll learn how the boy goes to live with the six stars.

*Bailey Quishenberry drew this illustration called "Seven Stars."*

**HERE IS SOME INSPIRATION FOR YOU, VALENTINE!**

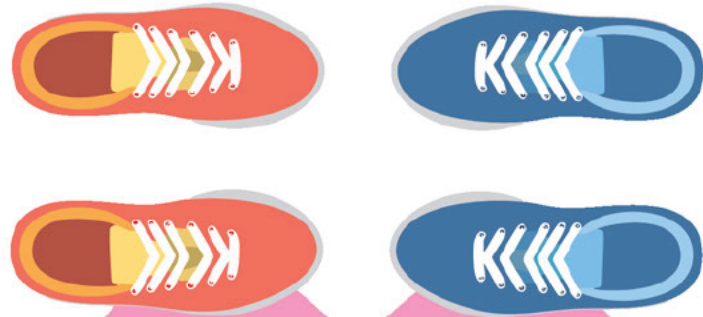
Cut along the dotted lines and spread the love! Here's a tip: After cutting out your cards, use packing tape to laminate each of them.

**VALENTINE'S DAY IS HERE! SEND US SOME LOVE, AND YOU MIGHT WIN A PRIZE.**

WE WANT TO SEE YOUR MOST CREATIVE VALENTINE'S DAY CARDS, ARTWORK OR MEMES USING SAAWANWAATOWEEWE. WE WILL SELECT TWO WINNERS, INCLUDING THE FUNNIEST DESIGN AND A PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD, ON THE TRIBE'S FACEBOOK PAGE. OPEN TO ALL AGES. SUBMIT YOUR DESIGN(S) BY FEBRUARY 12. WE WILL SHARE THE ENTRIES ON FACEBOOK ON FEBRUARY 13 FOR VOTING AND ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS ON VALENTINE'S DAY, FEBRUARY 14.

Email your entries to [media@shawnee-tribe.com](mailto:media@shawnee-tribe.com) before the deadline.

**I LOVE YOU!**



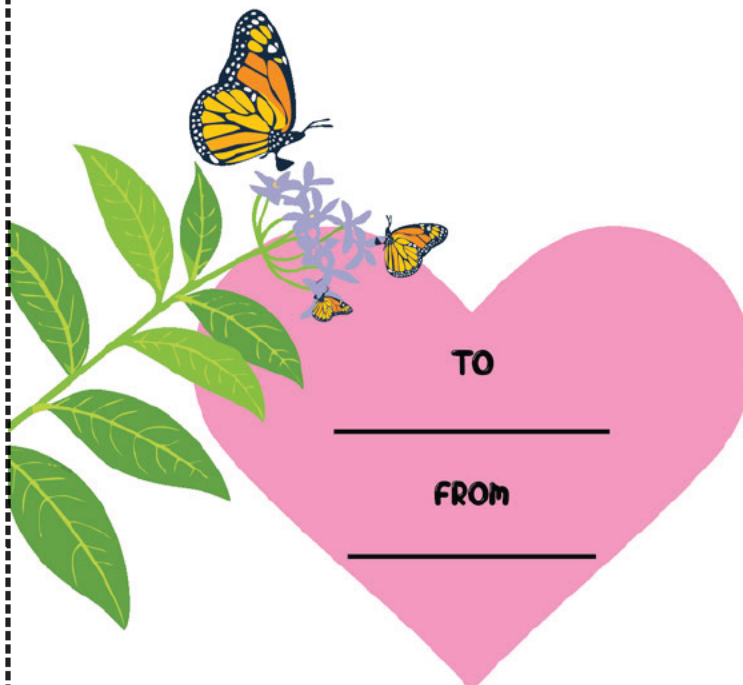
TO \_\_\_\_\_  
FROM \_\_\_\_\_

**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!**



TO \_\_\_\_\_  
FROM \_\_\_\_\_

**...because you give me BUTTERFLIES!**



TO \_\_\_\_\_  
FROM \_\_\_\_\_



# HASENOOKI



## IN MEMORIAM

*The Shawnee Tribe extends its deep condolences to the surviving family and friends of citizens who have recently passed on.*

- Tony Buster Booth
- Mason Issiah Brown
- Leota Ann (Price) Burnett
- Chelsea Diana Cavener
- Donald Gene Greenfeather
- Linda Lou (Chamberlain) Humble
- Ross Wade Little
- Wilma Sue (McCamish) Mallory
- Allen Leon Nusser
- Judith Marie (Daugherty) Ohlmann
- Bobbie Lee (Greenfeather) Pendell
- Vicki Lyn Radebaugh
- David Reed Sparkman
- Linda Irene (Swisher) Stogsdill
- George Clifford Washington

Please note: Surviving family members of the deceased have reported the names listed here to the Citizen Enrollment Department. For assistance or to notify the tribe of a citizen's passing, visit [shawnee-nsn.gov/enrollment](http://shawnee-nsn.gov/enrollment) or contact [enrollment@shawnee-tribe.com](mailto:enrollment@shawnee-tribe.com).

## SHAWNEE TRIBE BURIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Tribal citizens are eligible for up to \$5,000 in assistance covering funeral and burial costs after all other financial and insurance funding has been depleted. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 180 calendar days from the date of death. Visit [shawnee-nsn.gov/burial](http://shawnee-nsn.gov/burial) for more information, or contact Program Specialist Tammy Burkybile at (918) 542-2441, ext. 106, for assistance.

FEB

# THE SHAWNEE JOURNAL

2025



**SHAWNEE TRIBE**  
**29 S HWY 69A**  
**MIAMI, OKLAHOMA**  
**74354 U.S.A.**

PRE-SORT STANDARD  
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