

VOLUME 2 ISSUE NO. 01



# THE QUAPAW

# POST



THE QUAPAW POST  
2021  
CANDIDATES  
SPECIAL E



## “ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY”





**The Quapaw Post**

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A Year to Remember Story -  
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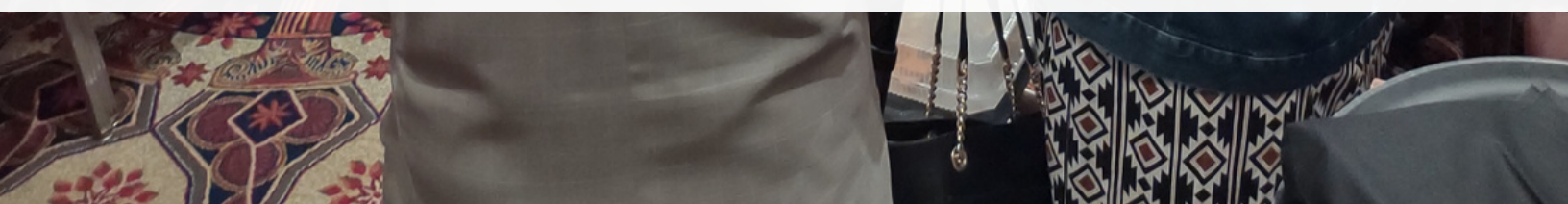
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**Toni Shawnee**

## A Year to Remember



Toni Shawnee, a member of the Quapaw and Hopi Nations, made history on Tuesday, June 7, as the NJCAA named Shawnee and fellow teammate Cinthia Ramirez, to the NJCAA All-Americans.

According to a recent article from NDNSPORTS, Shawnee and Ramirez are the first Express softball student-athletes to earn the accolade, but that accomplishment is just one of many for Shawnee and Ramirez in a season to be remembered.

Shawnee continues to set records in virtually every category of pitching, striking out 140 batters on the year and carrying a 14-6 record, with 13 of those games being games in which Shawnee started and finished. In her season debut, Shawnee struck out 13, setting a single-game record for the Express. Shawnee also helped the team to four postseason victories, while collecting a 2.46 ERA. Her last game of the season was yet another phenomenal finish as Shawnee pitched a complete-game shutout of No. 6 Middlesex College in the seventh-place game at the NJCAA Div. III Softball Championship.

The Express finished the 2021 campaign with 24 more wins than they had the season before, carefully crafting an underdog of the year story; of those wins 14 can be directly attributed to Shawnee and her amazing season.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**QUAPAW NATION CHAIRMAN**  
**Joseph Tali Byrd**

**Can you tell us about your family? How are they related to the Quapaw Nation, what clan are you from, etc.?**

I have an amazing wife Raquel, a wonderful daughter Hekili, and another love bundle on the way! They are my rock. I am buffalo clan. I descend from the Griffin-Track family. Victor Griffin Final Quapaw Chief (1929-1958), Peter Clabber Principal Chief (1898-1926), Nightwalker Chief and signer of 1818 and 1833 Treaties. I also descend from strong women in my bloodline including my late mother Suzy Moore, grandmother Ardina Moore, her grandmother Minnie Track, and Anna Thompson known as Grandma Slagle. My late grandfather Dr. James Moore served as captain in the Indian Health Service and Chief Medical Officer of the Miami clinic for 14 years.

**What are your qualifications that will allow you to excel for the position you are running for? Please list your education background, work experience and anything else you believe is relevant to the position. Do you have any gaming experience?**

I hold a law degree from the University of New Mexico with an Indian Law Certificate. I also have a Masters of Jurisprudence Indian Law from the University of Tulsa and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Northeastern State University. While in law school, I interned at the Department of Justice Office of Tribal Justice in Washington, D.C. and I externed at the United States Attorneys Office District of New Mexico Indian Country Crimes Division. I have twelve years of gaming experience in both regulatory and operations. I have an additional six years of bank experience, which combined with gaming is eighteen years of working in financial institutions. For the last 22 months, I have served as Chairman of our tribal government and our business enterprises. In that short time, I navigated our nation and our corporate board through a worldwide pandemic, a forensic audit, a National Indian Gaming Commission investigation, two external audits that came back satisfactory, refinanced \$675 million dollars in gaming debt, opened a \$285 million dollar casino construction property in our ancestral homelands, settled a copyright infringement suit on behalf of the nation, repatriated funerary and ceremonial objects at Angel Mounds. I also steered the litigation strategy that resulted in the affirmation of the Quapaw Reservation. I have guided the expansion of our entire court system by increasing the number of judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and other personnel staff. I personally negotiated our cross-deputization agreements with local law enforcement necessary to address crimes occurring within our jurisdictional boundaries. I represent the Nation on the Northeastern Tribal Health System, the clinic that administers healthcare to area tribal citizens. I represent the Nation at the Inter-Tribal Council, a consortium of nine tribal nations that administers programs -



**QUAPAW NATION CHAIRMAN  
JOSEPH TALI BYRD**

and services to area tribal citizens. I represent the Nation as a delegate to the National Congress of American Indians, the organization responsible for advocating on behalf of tribal nations for federal legislation and policy. I also represent the seventeen tribal nations of Eastern Oklahoma Region on the Tribal Nations Leadership Council to the Department of Justice.

**What changes do you want to make for the betterment of the Quapaw Nation?**

Government reform by way of the Constitution Committee is imperative at this point and I fully support its efforts in bringing the necessary change to our system of government. The Business Committee model is an antiquated system of governing and it was bestowed upon us by the federal government. We need to exercise our tribal sovereignty by creating a governing document that works for us in today's environment, but incorporates our traditions and culture to reflect our ideals as a people. Two years ago, I pushed legislation for the BC to assume authority over all our enterprises because for so long they operated under a shroud of secrecy. It was not the greatest move, but it was the best move at that time, plus it allowed the Business Committee to have first-hand knowledge of our enterprises and for them to better communicate and relay relevant information to our citizens. The goal should be to root out any political influence on our enterprises, I have taken steps to correct this flaw, but those roots run deep on our board. We need to establish a better process for selecting who sits on our enterprise boards, and that change can only come by way of the Constitution Committee and our General Council.

**How will you improve the Quapaw Nation?**

I vow to continue doing the best I can do, elevating our nation, and pushing our government and businesses as far as possible because I believe our people deserve the very best. Our people deserve the best healthcare, the best housing, the best education, and I will continue to push these initiatives as I have for my entire term in office. Our employees play a crucial role in delivering services and they also deserve the best technology, the best training, and the best leadership possible because we count on them to do their part to make our nation great.

**Why should people vote for you?**

Vote for me because I'm just getting started. I've only been a Chairman for twenty-two months, and the other folks I replaced had twenty-two years. Sure I have made mistakes and I will make more because I am only human, but I own them all. I'm not afraid of making difficult and necessary decisions if it benefits our citizens in some way. I stand by my record and what we have been able to accomplish in my first term as Chairman.

**Why do you want to be a part of the Business Committee? What motivates you to run for this position?**

Serving on the BC takes a considerable amount of time and energy. Every hour of every day, my mind is on our tribe and our businesses. To know that nearly 10,000 people including children, elders, families, and employees count on me to bring my A game daily is inspiration. My greatest motivation is my partner Raquel and my daughter Hekili. They are a reminder that the work I do today, secures a future for our tribal youth and the generations that come after me. I want to be a good role model for our tribal youth and motivate them to dream big and reach for the stars.



## **QUAPAW NATION CHAIRMAN JOSEPH TALI BYRD**

### **How do you handle pressure to meet pending deadlines?**

I work well under pressure, I prefer it actually. I had a property law professor tell me, “Pressure is a privilege, and champions adjust”. Serving as an elected official is a privilege, some folks lose sight of that, and it becomes an expectation or entitlement. No, this is a privilege, the least we could do once elected is meet deadlines and be champions while we have this honor of serving our people.

### **What morals and values do you find important and why do they qualify you to hold this position?**

My family raised me to be a good citizen in the community, to help others if you can, and to respect your elders. I was taught the value of an honest days work at an early age, and as an adult, I’m someone who starts feeling guilty if I’m not working on something, especially if I am being paid to produce. I was also taught how to conduct myself around tribal and cultural gatherings. I bring these foundational teachings with me to this position and it has allowed me to treat our citizens and employees with respect and fairness. It allows me to listen to someone’s concerns and get all of the information I can to make the best decision rather than allowing my emotions to get the best of me and make decisions out of fear or anger. I was also taught to do my best, and that is what I will continue to do if elected.

### **Have any open comments?**

We are in what I call a transition period. We are transitioning from an unhealthy financial position with the previous administration to an extremely positive position in terms of our business enterprises. This performance will soon allow more revenue to flow directly to our tribal government to better fund services and programs for our citizens. We are also transitioning from the impacts of the Covid pandemic across all our entities. Nearly \$20 million dollars of direct relief was distributed to every Quapaw, and I am proud of that feat considering there were other tribes that did nothing or were distributed at a much slower rate. Now we have millions of dollars in free money from the federal government in ARPA funding for tribal infrastructure and other community projects. We will likely not experience this type of funding from the federal government ever again in our lifetime, so we literally have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make the best use of these funds by putting them to work for our nation. This takes planning, strategy, and hard work to deliver large projects of this scale and I remain enthusiastic and dedicated to the mission of delivering these results to our people.

### **What are your greatest accomplishments from your last term?**

Restarting our language program. Hosting the first inter-tribal Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math fair for local area youth. Creating the first Quapaw Nation Youth Council. Increasing higher education scholarship amounts. Increasing elder utility assistance. Distributing nearly \$20 million dollars in direct covid relief to all citizens. Re-financing the debt of Downstream and Saracen and paying down a combined \$95 million dollars in debt for both properties. Introducing the Bear Settlement bill HR 4715 to Congress and testifying to the House Natural Resources Committee for the distribution for ALL eligible Quapaws. Livestreaming all monthly BC meetings. Creating a communication department to deliver news to our citizens more rapidly. Re-established the tribal newsletter delivered on a more consistent basis. Created the first Academic Banquet to honor all tribal graduates. Lead litigation strategy for reaffirmation of Quapaw Reservation. Overhaul of the tribal court system. Tribal Easter Egg Hunt. Appointed to the tribal advisory council to the Department of Justice, representing seventeen tribal nations in eastern Oklahoma.



**CHAIRMAN CANDIDATE**  
**Buddy Shapp**

**Can you tell us about your family? How are they related to the Quapaw Nation, what clan are you from, etc.?**

I am Quapaw and Seneca-Cayuga. We are from the Elk Clan. Buddy Shapp was my father. My grandfather was Thomas Shapp. My great-grandmother was Julia Stafford Shapp. My great-great-grandmother was Pa-Ha-See. My great-great-great-grandmother was Mi-Hah-Sa, more commonly known as Widow Stafford.

I have been married to Tressa (Plier) Shapp for 30 + years. We have two children. Our son, Thomas Wade Shapp, is married to Mandi and they have two sons, Walker and Sawyer. Our daughter, Whitney Hagen, is married to Dale. They have two dogs and two cats.

**What are your qualifications that will allow you to excel for the position you are running for? Please list your education background, work experience and anything else you believe is relevant to the position. Do you have any gaming experience?**

I graduated from Quapaw High School in 1988. From there, I attended and graduated from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College with an Associate's Degree in 1990. I then attended and graduated from Missouri Southern State College with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice Administration in 1992.

I was a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Police Officer in Arizona for two years. I spent eight years as a BIA Criminal Investigator stationed in New Mexico and Oklahoma. In 2004, I was hired as a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Special Agent. I spent 10 years in Indiana and the final 6+ years in Alaska.

During my 26+ years in federal law enforcement I worked and dealt with a variety of people from different backgrounds, socio-economic levels, and education levels. I also worked and dealt with people from various levels of local, state, federal, and tribal governments.

I'm an avid reader and enjoy non-fiction books, books about history, and books about leadership. A few of my favorite authors are Jon Krakauer, Hampton Sides, and Ken Blanchard. I've read books about leadership authored by Blanchard, Dave Ramsey, and John Maxwell. I also like listen to podcasts. I am always striving to learn and to gain more knowledge.

The only gaming experience I have is selling pull tabs at Quapaw Bingo while in college.





## **CHAIRMAN CANDIDATE BUDDY SHAPP**

### **What changes do you want to make for the betterment of the Quapaw Nation?**

I will be moving the Chairman's office to Quapaw. This will make me more accessible to the government and to the people that we serve and improve communications with all stakeholders. More frequent and direct communication will also be a great way to address the bickering that we are currently dealing with. The current perception is that the Business Committee has offices behind closed doors at Downstream and, as such, they are not available to the people. This may not be the reality. However, as we know, perception is often at least as important as reality, especially in a representative government. Along with the relocation of the Chairman's office, I will hold two meetings per month for question and answer sessions with citizens.

### **Why should people vote for you?**

People should vote for me because I have a lifetime of experiences and learning and I bring fresh ideas to the table. I have a willingness to listen and the desire to act to improve situations and projects. In my career, I didn't have the option of kicking the can down the road because it was easier that way. The Business Committee's actions or inactions have the potential to affect people's lives. If I'm elected, I won't forget that, and I will keep projects moving forward.

I live in Quapaw and I will be available to the Quapaw people. One of my pet peeves is when you leave a voice mail or send someone an email that then is ignored with no response. The Quapaw people will know that if they call or email me, they will receive a reply from me.

### **What will you do if you cannot live up to your campaign promises?**

Each seat on the Business Committee is a two year term, that's not a lot of time. Three other Business Committee members will need to share my vision in order to get those projects accomplished. If my ideas don't come to fruition, I will report this back to the Quapaw people so they know why the project failed to move forward.

I detailed my pledges and promises when announcing my candidacy on Facebook. These are things that I committed to and they are things that I can control. They are:

- I will serve a maximum of three terms (I personally believe the Business Committee should have term limits).
- I will not be running with or endorsing another candidate (I can only control my actions and how I vote).
- Monthly question and answer sessions.
- My office will be in Quapaw.
- No preferential treatment of my family and friends.
- Visit a different Quapaw Nation business or department weekly.
- Drive my own vehicle to work.
- Work with the education department to create a scholarship, with funds I personally provide, for Quapaw Nation youth seeking a wildlife or criminal justice related degree.



## **CHAIRMAN CANDIDATE BUDDY SHAPP**

### **Why do you want to be a part of the Business Committee? What motivates you to run for this position?**

I want to be a part of the Business Committee because I believe things can be done differently for the betterment of the Nation. I am running because I want what is best for the Quapaw people. I want to serve and lead the Quapaw people to a better future.

I always planned on returning to Quapaw and giving back to the area where I was raised. Up until a couple months ago, the last thing on my mind was running for Chairman. I am retired from the federal government but have a full time job now. I'm very satisfied with my current employer, co-workers, management, and the work I do in my current position. I have no hidden agenda or motives, I simply believe the Business Committee can do better for the Quapaw people.

### **What are three critical areas of need in the Quapaw Nation you will address?**

The three critical areas I want to address are housing, public safety, and education. First, with regard to housing, I find it ludicrous that we have had more than \$2 million of grant funds that have gone unused for more than a year because the current Business Committee has apparently failed to act.

I believe public safety is a priority because of the challenges that have come from the Longhorn judgement. Public safety is one of the primary functions of a government. We are a Nation but we are a relatively small community where most people know each other. Restorative justice options can assure that we are not only punishing those convicted of wrongdoing but helping the victims receive some healing while, at the same time, taking efforts to improve the future of the perpetrator. I first learned about Restorative Justice at a conference in Canada. It is often used by First Nations communities in Canada and it is an alternative to the typical criminal or civil court process. It can take various forms but, typically, the victim, suspect, a mediator, one representative for the victim, and one representative for the suspect sit in a circle and discuss the event. I would suggest putting an elder in the mix also. The group then comes to an agreement on how to rectify the wrong.

I think we can do more for education both for our citizens and our employees. I'm not just referring to higher education. Not everyone wants or needs to go to college. We need welders, plumbers, electricians, truck drivers, heating and air, etc. and that education is readily available in Oklahoma for our members.

I like the idea of an elder mentorship program where elders adopt our Quapaw Nation youth in high school. They could have lunch together once a month and the elders could monitor the progress of our youth. There would be some logistics to work out but linking our elders with our youth could help them all see that we are of one Nation with a shared future.

I would like to see the Nation offer our non-tribal employees tuition assistance. As a significant employer in the region, we should be helping our employees who are seeking to better themselves. This will make our employees more effective and more engaged and will allow us to attract better staff members – improving the operations of the Quapaw Nation. The program would come with written agreements assuring that the employee remains with the Nation for a reasonable time so that we gain from our investment in that employee's growth.



## **CHAIRMAN CANDIDATE BUDDY SHAPP**

### **How long have you been active within the Quapaw Nation?**

I grew up in Quapaw so I've been going to the powwow as long as I can remember. I remember helping my grandfather set up his camp as far back as grade school. I've attended several General Council meetings over the years. I lived away from the area for the past 26+ years. I kept up with the goings on with the Nation and voted in the Nation's elections going back at least 10 years.

### **Do you believe it is important to incorporate cultural aspects into Business Committee decisions? If so, how do you plan on incorporating them?**

Since deciding to run for Chairman I have been visiting with our elders. I have gained a lot from these visits and I will continue this regardless of the outcome of the election.

We currently have an elder committee. I like the idea of a committee of elders that the Business Committee can meet with. I would propose it as a monthly meeting but that would need to be discussed further. I think it is important to communicate with our elders about the issues and to draw from their wisdom. The current elder committee could have its duties expanded to take on this role.

### **Have any open comments?**

I would like to see the Quapaw Nation develop a rehabilitation center for hawks and eagles. Other tribes are working with the USFWS to do this very same thing. It would be outstanding for the Quapaw people to request feathers from the Nation and not have to go through the USFWS.

I want to see the Nation begin returning its pastureland to a more natural state. This process is referred to a Regenerative Agriculture. It is something that a variety of organizations are behind. In a nutshell, you plant a variety of plants, including native plants, in order to keep a root growing as long as the growing season allows. There are several benefits, including less feeding of hay, less fertilizer, less chemical use, and less diesel costs. Wildlife benefits as well. Because of the mixture of plants the pasture no longer looks like a groomed yard. I'm not an extreme environmentalist by any means. I use plastic straws, plastic bags, plastic forks/spoons/knives, and disposable plates on occasion. But I think we can all agree, using less fertilizer, chemicals, and diesel is better for us and for our Nation's land.

In keeping with the wildlife theme, I'd propose the Nation creating a wildlife area around the Picher/Cardin area. This large tract of land would be set aside for the Nation's members to fish, hunt, trap, hunt for mushrooms, pick berries, etc.

I want to put the elders and youth together as much as possible. One of my proposals is creating a camp where elders teach youth skills related to nature, such as identification and uses of various berries, plants, and wildlife. I believe this would be a great opportunity to help keep the history of the Quapaw Nation alive.

I believe we should be good neighbors to our fellow Tribes based in Ottawa County. The Quapaw Nation is by far the largest employer of the Tribes based in Ottawa County. I believe, if on occasion, a fellow Tribe needs assistance with a project or a specialized piece of equipment we own, we should offer to help.



# Sovereignty Symposium

By Austin Headlee

Chairman Joseph Byrd met with tribal leaders across North America at the Sovereignty Symposium in Oklahoma City on June 8 and 9. The Sovereignty Symposium provides a forum where ideas concerning common legal issues can be exchanged in a scholarly, non-adversarial environment.

Byrd sat on the criminal law panel with leaders of the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, Cherokee and Muscogee Nations, along with state and federal representatives. Health and wellbeing, economic futures and gaming were among the many panel topics of the symposium.

The McGirt ruling was a hot topic on the criminal law panel, and each speaker discussed how the court decision impacted their tribal land. A sure takeaway from the symposium is that Native Nations are seizing the opportunity to exercise their rights as sovereign land leaders.

Since Jan. 1, 2021, the Choctaw Nation has validated 3,285 criminal cases, including 95 felonies, 1,069 misdemeanors and 1,242 infractions and violations, according to Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation. There exists, to this day, a perception of limited jurisdiction for Tribal Nations. Through the McGirt ruling – one in which the Supreme Court found that certain Tribal reservations were never disestablished and that the state does not have jurisdiction to prosecute major crimes involving Native Americans within those boundaries – that has begun to change.

Batton spoke passionately about the future of Tribal court systems and expressed his desire not just to incarcerate people, but to bring out the best in people. He talked about an individual with drug and alcohol abuse issues who was able to enter the Cherokee's recovery center, and that choice helped to get them on the right path.

"We are implementing [new policies] we're doing everything that we can to make sure that we be accountable," said Batton. "We're responsible to those people that need to [go to trial] and [have] gone to court and we're going to do everything we can to make sure that it's done in a good, fair, quick, expeditious way."

Tribal governments have proven their ability to become self-governing and uphold safety within their boundaries which is evident by their ability to trial civil and legal cases in their own court systems and through the utilization of their Emergency Management Service (EMS) departments. Furthermore, many Tribes have extended jurisdictions to outside area law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of their citizens within their boundaries.

"What you look at is, as the government the United States has taken its boot off tribal nations in this country, what we've done is govern ourselves just fine as we were doing before European contact, and we're in fact governing our affairs, I think better than any government in this country," said Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation.

Before the Lawhorn decision, which reaffirmed the sovereignty of the Quapaw Nation reservation, Chairman Byrd and Quapaw Nation leaders looked to the Five Civilized Tribes for guidance following the landmark McGirt decision. The Five Civilized Tribes had about a year to implement new rules and guidelines following the McGirt decision, which allowed smaller tribes, such as the Quapaw Nation, to observe the Five Civilized Tribes' successes and implement them into their own reservation.

"What's most important to us is doing the hard work in ensuring the safety of everyone in our reservation, whether they are Native American or not," said Chairman Byrd.

Since the Lawhorn decision, the Quapaw Nation has bolstered its EMS department. Charles Addington, a former Senior Adviser to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), is the Quapaw Chief Marshall. Addington and his years of work with the BIA are a valuable asset to the Quapaw Nation as they go forward in ensuring the safety of their residents. The Quapaw Nation also has its court system and recovery center.



Business Committee Member Zack Turley was instrumental in implementing the first-ever Tribal pension plan for EMS workers. The pension plan makes Tribes competitive in the EMS job market, which already struggles with recruiting and retaining people in the field.

Trevor Pemberton, General Counsel to Governor Kevin Stitt, also sat on the criminal law panel and expressed the state's concerns over tribal jurisdiction. Pemberton said that while the Tribes and the state of Oklahoma may not agree on everything, they can all agree that it is a "unique" time in the state.

Pemberton asserted that nearly 6,000 federal court cases in northern and eastern Oklahoma went unprosecuted within the first 18 months following the McGirt decision. However, Clinton Johnson, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Oklahoma, quickly refuted Pemberton's claim. In the Northern District of Oklahoma, 3,669 Indian Country cases were presented to Johnson. While 1,145 cases were opened, 2,223 non-major crimes cases were referred to Indian Country court systems, giving tribes the opportunity to exercise their sovereignty.

"That is the same 2,223 cases that Trevor mentioned [found] in the Tulsa World article when they said, 'the Feds declined them,'" said Johnson. "I guess it's all about terminology. You're right, my office declined to prosecute them: I gave them to the sovereign Nations to prosecute. They are equipped to handle it. That is my job as the chief federal law enforcement officer in my district, it is my job to ensure safety. I could care less if the case went to the state, to the Feds or the Tribes as long as justice is served."

For transparency, Johnson disclosed that his office has declined and not referred 286 cases. He says the decision was made because the McGirt decision was initially made to retroactively include past cases from decades ago, including statute of limitation, evidence or witness problems.

Following the criminal law panel was a Q&A session, in which law students, attorneys, judges, media and other interested parties had the opportunity to ask questions. A law student posed the question of all the Tribes working together to build a singular justice system. Governor Anoatubby of the Chickasaw Nation believed there was an opportunity for that but believes there is still much work to be done for each Tribe individually.

"Listen, I'd love for you all to find an easy route to become part of the Cherokee Nation," joked Principal Chief Hoskins Jr. "I just don't think we're there yet."

The room erupted with laughter, with the panel figures agreeing that challenges stood in the path of the answer to that question.

Most evident during the Q&A was that there are still many questions left to answer; nevertheless, every individual chosen for the panel spoke with conviction. McGirt was the beginning, Lawhorn the second act. Still, there are many steps left to take, many jurisdictions left to be reaffirmed, many waiting patiently for recognition and for those that have finally been recognized after centuries, there are more barriers to break through.

As the criminal law panel put on display, and as evidenced throughout the reaffirmed reservations, Indian Country is fully capable of running its court systems, even though the state of Oklahoma believes differently.



**Quapaw Nation Chairman Joseph Byrd and Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby**



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## ROWENA KIHEGA

Rowena Kihega has worked for the Downstream Casino Resort for over 10 years in various departments and shifts. She always brings a smile into the workplace and strives to make those around her happy and brighten up their day.

The diverse workload Row had at Downstream has built some strong friendships and allowed her to meet numerous people. She started her Downstream career at PBX before moving to hotel housekeeping and EBS before moving to security where she's worked since 2020.

"Whatever department that you work in, somehow find the fun in it," said Row. "If you can't find the fun in what you're doing, you're going to be, you know, irritable, whatever. I think I've always been able to find the fun in whatever department that I worked in. I put a little spin on it, and I make jokes, you know, make people laugh."

One thing a lot of people may not realize about working security at a casino is that a lot of customer service is required for the position. Sometimes it's something as simple as showing a customer how to use their player's card or greeting them as they walk past in the lobby.

When she's not at work, Row likes to relax by working on crossword puzzles and watching videos on her phone. First and foremost, Row values her family. Even while working the over night shift, she tries to make time for family.

"I think I would like to say I tried to put my family above everything," said Row. "And it's kind of twofold because at the same time, I will work crazy hours at work, I think the most hours I've worked are maybe like 32 overtime hours. And that's because it's like something is coming up and I know I'm gonna need that extra money for my kids or for a trip with the kids something like that. So I will bust my butt to get that extra money so that we have extra that we can go and do stuff."







**QUAPAW NATION  
SECRETARY TREASURER**

**GUY BARKER**

**Can you tell us about your family? How are they related to the Quapaw Nation, what clan are you from, etc.?**

I am Quapaw and Seneca-Cayuga. We are from the Elk Clan. Buddy Shapp was my father. My grandfather was Thomas Shapp. My great-grandmother was Julia Stafford Shapp. My great-great-grandmother was Pa-Ha-See. My great-great-great-grandmother was Mi-Hah-Sa, more commonly known as Widow Stafford.

I have been married to Tressa (Pliler) Shapp for 30 + years. We have two children. Our son, Thomas Wade Shapp, is married to Mandi and they have two sons, Walker and Sawyer. Our daughter, Whitney Hagen, is married to Dale. They have two dogs and two cats.

**What are your qualifications that will allow you to excel for the position you are running for? Please list your education background, work experience and anything else you believe is relevant to the position. Do you have any gaming experience?**

I am the reigning NAFOA financial executive of the year, a distinction bestowed upon the best and most influential treasurer or financial officer of any Indian nation in the United States. I was selected from a pool of nominees across all 573 federally recognized tribal governments. I was the youngest recipient of this award in its history at the 40th annual NAFOA conference. I have undergraduate degrees in mechanical engineering, petroleum engineering, and accounting from Oklahoma State University. I also received my doctorate of jurisprudence from the Oklahoma City University School of Law, where I clerked for the chief justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court. Before law school, I worked as a petroleum engineer for several energy producers in Oklahoma. I have done everything from designing wellbores and gathering systems to financing multiunit drilling packages. In addition, I have used my experience in our gaming enterprises to negotiate one of the most transformational refinancings in Indian gaming history. Very rarely does someone get to say that they are the best at what they do in the country, but I am humbled to be able to back that statement up with the affirmation of my peers across Native America.

**What changes do you want to make for the betterment of the Quapaw Nation?**

In my short tenure as Secretary-Treasurer, I am proud to say that I have delivered on all the platforms that I proffered just two years ago, but these changes are in their infancy, and I wish to continue my work. These platforms include: Creating better transparency concerning tribal businesses and furnishing financial reports of all tribal enterprises to the General Council; Informing the General Council on matters of tribal business decisions; addressing your concerns about tribal healthcare and getting rid of UMR; always prioritizing tradition, culture, and language; diversifying tribal economic -



## **QUAPAW NATION SECRETARY TREASURER GUY BARKER**

interests with organic growth rather than debt; zealously advocating for the adoption of a formal constitution; encouraging a tolerant atmosphere for the free exchange of ideas; and always making decisions in the best interests of the whole tribe and not just for a few of its citizens.

### **How will you improve the Quapaw Nation?**

I hope to transform the Quapaw Nation into a cultural and economic powerhouse that can stand as a shining example to the rest of Indian country. I hope to cultivate a transparent and ethical form of government that will serve the needs of our people and preserve our culture for generations to come. We have made tremendous strides over the last two years, but we are only getting started.

### **Why should people vote for you?**

Don't vote for me if you want an opaque government. Don't vote for me if you want a toxic work environment for employees. Don't vote for me if you want wasteful spending. Don't vote for me if you want an outsider with no connection to our community... Vote for me if you want someone who will put all Quapaws and our values first!

**Some Quapaw Nation members have difficulty communicating with the current administration (offices are behind security at Downstream, most don't respond to emails, etc.). Do you have a plan to improve communication between the BC and the Quapaw members, and how do you plan to do that?**

I believe we have made huge strides regarding tribal member communication, but we are early in the process, and I expect more progress to come. In my first term, we created a communications department, began simulcasting all meetings, turned a quarterly newsletter into a monthly periodical, and answered hundreds if not thousands of tribal member calls and emails. In the future, I would like to make more information readily accessible through our website for frequently asked questions and a help desk and question portal.

### **Can you explain your organization and planning skills?**

My significant other would jokingly argue that I have no organizational skills. But in all seriousness, I am a detail and goal-oriented person that thrives under the pressure of numerous simultaneous projects. This role requires someone that will never lose sight of the big picture, and in life, some people see the tree, and others see the forest. I am a forest type of person that plans for the worst-case scenario but hopes for the best.

### **What did you learn during your time in office?**

The value of a fantastic team can never be overstated. We have the greatest group of employees in Indian country, and they are the secret ingredient to our tribe's continued success.

### **How do you think you will improve if re-elected?**

I believe my first term has been spent cleaning up the mess of a previous 20-year administration. But I am not just a problem solver, I am also creative, and I would like to see some of my ideas through. We have spent two years cleaning the house; now it is time to decorate.



## QUAPAW NATION SECRETARY TREASURER GUY BARKER

### Have any open comments?

It is certainly no secret that I am also running for the United States Congress in addition to Secretary-Treasurer of the Quapaw Nation. A race that I certainly have no guarantee of winning; however, my opponent and the family of my predecessor have challenged my candidacy for this reason. Tribal nations can never have too many advocates in Washington D.C.. Every aspect of tribal governance is affected by Congress, from federal appropriations bills to rulemakings that change how we conduct business. Every bit of what we do, from mundane day-to-day operations to 10-year strategic plans, is tethered to the whims of Washington D.C. I have extensive experience advocating on Capitol Hill on behalf of our Nation, whether for the appropriation of Bear, daily communication with the Treasury Department, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of Justice, or the Department of Interior. I am the best situated to carry out our Nation's interests because I have the experience, education, energy, awareness, and competence necessary to take care of all our tribal members equally. Not only have we made great progress in appropriating Bear, but we have re-organized our businesses in a way that once paid off, will contribute far more than any Bear settlement every year—if properly managed.

In our first term, we have increased communication and transparency to a level never imagined before. We opened the first commercially owned casino of any tribe in Oklahoma. Paid down over \$100 million dollars in debt in the last six months and raised over \$725 million to eliminate a decade-old interest-only payment scheme. We transformed numerous unprofitable businesses into successful profit generators while creating and filling nearly 1000 jobs during the worst hiring crisis of all time. We distributed more than \$30 million in individual tribal member assistance and increased utility assistance, elder assistance, and scholarship funding for the first time in nearly a decade. We have repaired relationships with financial institutions, tribal nations, and Washington DC. We are the second tribe to successfully reaffirm our reservation boundary, whereas the largest tribal Nation in America tried and failed. We have rooted out corruption and held terrible actors responsible in our courts. We have received the distinction of having the best Treasure in the entire country and a Chairman who is a direct adviser to the Secretary of Interior, selected above all other tribal leaders from this region of the country.

Our accomplishments in the first two years of service are numerous. We are proud of the success we have enjoyed in such a short amount of time while simultaneously cleaning up the mishandlings of 20+ year predecessors. Quapaw Nation is finally on the right path, but we are only getting started! So if this is the type of progress you would like to see more of, I humbly ask for your vote on July 23rd!



**SECRETARY TREASURER CANDIDATE**

## **Wena Supernaw**

**Can you tell us about your family? How are they related to the Quapaw Nation, what clan are you from, etc.?**

I am a direct descendent of Jr. Supernaw, Ick Supernaw, Grandma Supernaw, Kahike Stete (Tall Chief), Kahike Te'da, Wazhi Dagni, Wapa Te Sah, Kahike Tonika, and Kahike Thompa te. The last seven of whom were hereditary Quapaw Chiefs. My Quapaw name is Mi-na-zhi, Standing Sun, given to me by Grandma Supernaw. I belong to the Snake Clan.

In addition to my Quapaw ancestors, my husband Mark Turner, mother Judy Supernaw, brother Larry Supernaw, sister Christine Supernaw, Aunts, Uncles, Nieces, Nephews, Cousins, and Friends have all helped me remain grounded and true to what it means to be Quapaw. I am blessed with a strong family connection to the Quapaw Nation that comes with equal measures of joy and responsibility that I take very seriously.

**What are your qualifications that will allow you to excel for the position you are running for? Please list your education background, work experience and anything else you believe is relevant to the position. Do you have any gaming experience?**

I am running for the Quapaw Nation Secretary-Treasurer position.

I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. I was Treasurer of George Mason's Business Honor Society my senior year.

After working for a real estate development firm, bank holding company, and consultant, I landed at MetLife. My career there began in a Real Estate Investments Financial Planning and Analysis position. From there, I grew into multiple roles in Securities Accounting, Investments Technology, Investments Finance and Corporate Finance. Each of those roles came with important lessons that taught me proficiencies and practical experience in the business world and helped build my portfolio of skills.

Those lessons included: the power of listening, owning one's own mistakes, building diverse teams, how to capitalize on individual team member strengths, building consensus among large groups of people, personal accountability, how to overcome fears of the unknown, tailoring communication to a specific audience, how to respectfully have difficult conversations, appreciation of others and their contributions, critical thinking, and most importantly, fair play.

These lessons did not happen without bumps and bruises along the way. After 30 years of challenges and successes at MetLife, I retired 2 years ago as the Vice President and Global Process Leader of Management Reporting.



## SECRETARY TREASURER CANDIDATE WENA SUPERNAW

For 6 years, I was a member of the Board of Directors for Big Brothers Big Sisters, holding officer positions of Board Secretary and Board Governance Chair for 5 years, and named 2021 Board Member of the Year.

Last year, I ran for a Quapaw Nation Member position. Although the campaign was not entirely successful, it was a wonderful experience. It was an opportunity to rekindle old relationships and meet many more Quapaw people. I have attended many Quapaw Pow Wows, General Council meetings, Business Committee meetings, asked many questions during Open Forum, completed a catalogue of all Business Committee resolutions, joined the Constitution Committee December 2021 and simply, gotten involved. I was an active team member in launching and completing the Bear Proceed Distribution Equity petition that resulted in the signed resolution 091821-A and promoted language changes to the Bear Authorization Bill (H.R. 4715). Since last August, I have distributed monthly Business Committee summaries to hundreds of Quapaws and will continue to do so.

Although I do not have gaming experience, I have a proven record of studying, reading, and gaining knowledge in any relevant topic to make informed fact-based decisions with the sole purpose of benefiting the Quapaw People and growing/preserving our resources.

### **How will you improve the Quapaw Nation?**

1. Implement a 10-year Strategic Plan that defines our direction and priorities as a Nation with a balanced approach toward wellness, business growth and expense management. This will require significant involvement by the Quapaw people and must be voted upon by all of us. The topics (examples could include housing, elder care, culture, environment, law enforcement, the courts, education, food sovereignty, social services, land management, business development, etc.) defined in the Strategic Plan, become the Business Committee role descriptions, as well as, a means to evaluate future candidates and Business Committee job performance. The Strategic Plan then becomes the primary driver for how we budget and make investments for the future.
2. Improve Communications between the Quapaw government and the Quapaw people.
3. Serve ALL tribal members equally with respect, impartiality, openness, and humility. Continued active advocacy for full equal Bear proceed distribution to all enrolled tribal members as of September 27, 2019, still living at the time of distribution. We cannot rest until everyone eligible receives approximately \$26,000. Any amount less is an injustice.

**Some Quapaw Nation members have difficulty communicating with the current administration (offices are behind security at Downstream, most don't respond to emails, etc.). Do you have a plan to improve communication between the BC and the Quapaw members, and how do you plan to do that?**

1. Monthly Business Committee meeting Open Forum and social media is insufficient to address all the questions the Quapaw People have. The following is not my idea so the credit must go to the Chairman's challenger. Twice monthly Question and Answer sessions between the Business Committee and tribal members over a teleconference call would help significantly. Publishing the transcript of those sessions on the Tribal Website would also help.
2. The Tribal Website should become the primary source of fact-based information for the Quapaw People so a communication channel must be built on the website.
3. The Tribal Website and Quapaw Post should have an "Ask the BC" page where tribal members can submit questions, anonymously if they like, and receive written responses published each month. There are several steps that need to be taken regarding timely and accurate information exchange between the Business Committee and tribal members to increase the information flow and decrease the dependence on emails, phone calls and social media.



## SECRETARY TREASURER CANDIDATE WENA SUPERNAW

### What will you do if you cannot live up to your campaign promises?

To pass any resolution, it takes a simple majority, four usually, of Business Committee members to vote in a particular direction. Therefore, it would not be a good idea for anyone running for office to make a promise they may or may not be able to guarantee. A more realistic way to approach this is to state goals and to commit to working with others to make that goal become a reality. Although there are multiple goals that are part of my platform, the only one I can commit to individually is my Full-Time undivided attention. All the others will require a lot of teamwork with other Business Committee members and the Quapaw People.

### What morals and values do you find important and why do they qualify you to hold this position?

The most important value is equal treatment for all Quapaw People.

### What are three critical areas of need in the Quapaw Nation you will address?

Due to the connections and interdependencies between all of these, there are more than three.

1. We need **Government Reform** by supporting the Constitution Committee recommendations for increased balance of power. The amendments include increasing the Grievance Committee authority, implement the Ethics Commission, adopt the Quapaw Nation Code of Ethics, improvements to the Quapaw Nation Election Ordinance, and separation between the Business Committee and Casino Authorities. Of course, any of these changes must be voted upon by the Quapaw people at General Council. The Business Committee is accountable to the General Council.
2. Although only the General Council can address it, I want to help push forward solving the **Business Committee compensation** issue.
3. Progress has clearly been made in remediating the contaminated soil impact of Tar Creek. There is more to be accomplished regarding the **Environment**, specifically the water.
4. **Business Diversification** beyond gaming needs to be developed to continue our Nation's path of self-determination. Examples that come to mind include a bank, a technology incubation center, Quapaw Member owned small business development, home health care, and adult daycare.
5. There is a **Housing** shortage. Business development requires attracting, recruiting, and retaining talented Quapaw people. Safe affordable housing is in short supply and impedes our ability to attract talent. The QNHPP Director and Preservation Officer has shared some outstanding ideas in this regard. That is why it is critical to gain tribal member involvement.
6. There is a perception of unequal treatment of at least some Quapaw People for Social Services, responsiveness by the Business Committee and outstanding settlement distributions, such as Bear. My objective is to dig into our operational policies, our legal representation, and ensure **equal treatment of all Quapaw People** from our government, service providers, and settlements. These are all basic issues of trust, or the lack thereof, that need to be addressed and improved.

There is a theme that runs through all these, and it is Quapaw member/citizen open, honest involvement, and input, to effectively face and overcome these challenges.



## SECRETARY TREASURER CANDIDATE WENA SUPERNAW

### **What's your onboarding policy for your first three months in office? Six months? First year?**

I have already drafted my **90-day plan**, focused on learning the practical realities of performing my role. In my experience, I have learned that with a methodical and planned approach, 90 days is sufficient to get up to speed on the highest priorities. Some example goals in my 90-day plan include:

1. Updating signatories on bank accounts and other authorizing documents
2. Reviewing all bank account activity for the last year
3. Current and next fiscal year budget review
4. Detailed review of all legal firms engaged by the Nation and their expenses to date
5. Meeting with all departmental/program directors and business entity leaders to understand their biggest challenges/successes
6. Review of all outstanding litigation or settlements, and
7. Review of all sub-committee assignments, a vital role of the Nation's Secretary.

**Day 91 – 120** are focused on utilizing the learning and outcomes from the previous phase to partner with the Quapaw People and other Business Committee Members to carefully plan changes that might be needed.

The **last 6 months'** focus is around execution of those plans.

### **Do you believe it is important to incorporate cultural aspects into Business Committee decisions? If so, how do you plan on incorporating them?**

Yes, it is important to incorporate culture into our government decisions. Think about it this way, the way we budget and spend money tells us where our true priorities are, not based on what is said, but what gets acted upon. Good strides have been made, but there are additional opportunities to invest in the growth of our language program, our museum, our library, youth development and adult education. I would also like to see greater use of emerging technologies to make this more accessible to the Quapaw People. Examples include smartphone apps to text one another in Quapaw, translate, practice learning, and speaking the Quapaw language.

### **Have any open comments?**

Guh-Ne-Gay to the Quapaw Post for this opportunity to communicate with the O-Gah-Pah People. I would also like to humbly thank my extended Quapaw family and friends for their unwavering support. As the Quapaw Nation's needs have evolved over time, my education, extensive business experience, and enthusiasm for our future as a Nation, uniquely position me to serve the Quapaw People. You deserve **Full-Time**, undivided attention, so that our best days are ahead of us. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at [klsupernaw@hotmail.com](mailto:klsupernaw@hotmail.com) 678-521-8005.



# New Additions to the Herd

By Josemiguel Gomez

In 2022, Quapaw Cattle Company experienced adversity from the profoundly disrupted supply chain, inflation, labor shortage and much more. Still, the Quapaw Cattle Company returned stronger and has exciting news to share with us. The Quapaw Post sat down with Mitch Albright, Director of Agriculture for the Quapaw Nation, to discuss the recent diet change to the Buffalo Program and the new buffalo calves, four potential white buffalo.

**What benefits has the Quapaw Cattle Company observed from changing the bison diet, from grain-fed to grass-fed? When was this change implemented?**

“The marginal profit on buffalo meat is substantially higher compared to beef, everybody knows that. The benefit we found going grass-fed is that we're not putting grain into these animals, costing us more. Going grass-fed now, we're just feeding an alfalfa pellet, we were feeding them a pellet before, but it was soy hulls, and it came from grain; that's the only difference. Now, the marketing standpoint changes when you put grass-fed buffalo on the package versus just buffalo. The marginal profit has increased because of the grass-fed market demand. The change from grain-fed to grass-fed diet opened new revenue avenues; large companies in our processing facility have reached out to purchase our grass-fed buffalo meat. We have no real advantage to grain-finished buffalo versus grass-fed, costing us less money to feed our animals. The same gains for less money and potential new revenue avenues and new customers are possible by going grass-fed. So that was the reason for the change.





The change took place the day that we started calving this year. The AGA, American Grassfed Association standards, automatically disqualifies the older animals that we have now because they may have been in contact with grain at some time in their life, whether they ate it or not. But we knew that the new buffalo calves never had grain in their life.

Alfalfa is a highly high protein feed, it's horse quality feed you know 20% to 24% protein it's excellent stuff and it's actually right now costing cheaper than the grains pellets that we used to feed the buffalos.”

**How was the buffalo calving season this year?**

**Approximately, how many new buffalo calves have been born since Frosty, “the white buffalo” joined the herd? Any potential new white buffalo babies the Quapaw Nation might have?**

“2022 has been the best year we have had, for the ratio of cows to calves. Pretty dang good calf crop for the number of cows we have, it’s over the average. It's been an exceptional year. We have around 30 babies on the ground between the east and west herd.

Frosty is located in the west herd, I think there are 22 or 23 females with him and three Yellowstone bulls with him. So the 14 calves in the west herd will have either white or Yellowstone genetics. There are four calves with a mix of orange-tan and white color coats over there. A color I've never seen on our herds since I've been here, since 2015. Buffalo are born bright orange, and these ones, you saw the pictures, they're white. [So the answer is] yes, there's a definite influence there that is not traditional. I'm very excited to see the evolution of these four potential white buffalo.”





## THE QUAPAW POST

Ha-we,

As we reflect on another circle around the sun, we often forget how blessed we are to see that year come full-swing. For The Quapaw Post this year is hard to forget. Year one was the year of building blocks, finding things that worked and things that didn't. Year one was a year of many learning opportunities, because that is what mistakes are; a reminder of what not to do in the future. We began as a staff-of-one heading into undiscovered territory and today stand as a team of five, with what we believe to be a bright future. This is no longer a solo mission, a singular journey, we have built a team that continues to improve day in and day out. I am excited for the continued development of our communications both internally and externally. I personally look at this department with pride. A Group of rugrats among the tribe, but each of us with a common goal - to do better, to be better. We want the best for Quapaw Nation and we want, and need, your involvement; community engagement is of the utmost priority to us.

Here at The Quapaw Post, we recognize that we are unique from most Tribal news organizations. We are unique in that we operate under the elected leaders of the nation, and this can (and at times does) present its own challenges. Because we operate without autonomy, there will always be a shadow of bias, and we are acutely aware of that perception. Even with that perception, we say with conviction that we strive for fair treatment in every regard. If you feel your family is not highlighted, say something to us. If you are interested in hearing about something particular, say something to us. As previously mentioned, we deeply want and need your feedback to continue moving in a positive direction.

Things to keep an eye out for in the future would include; A "letters to the editor" quarterly section, ad marketing, more merchandise and overall continued improvement of our services to you, our consumers. Thank you for continuing to give us the opportunity to serve you.

Best regards,

Editor  
John E Rodgers

# Quapaw Nation Business Committee



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