THE POWERLIST

The Journal Record

NATIVE AMERICAN LEADERS IN BUSINESS

The First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City. Photo by James Pepper Henry.
Congratulations Dr. Monte Randall
On being selected as one of the Power 2021 Native American Leaders in Business

We appreciate your leadership and motivation to better serve the students at the College of the Muscogee Nation.

Mvto!

CMN Staff, Faculty, and Students
### 2021 Power List:
**Navte American Leaders in Business**

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**About The Journal Record’s 2021 Power List:**

The Native American leaders in business profiled in this special publication have made significant contributions to the Oklahoma business community. They bring varied backgrounds and vast expertise to their positions. These individuals represent diverse industries and hail from locations across the state. We recognize and honor their achievements in the following pages.

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*Jennifer Sharpe*

Special Projects Editor
**THE POWER LIST**

**MICHAEL BURGESS**

**PRESIDENT**

**PAWNEE NATION COLLEGE**

Since 2013, Michael Burgess has been president of Pawnee Nation College, one of two tribally chartered colleges in the state of Oklahoma.

His career includes a long history of working in a variety of areas with many different tribes, including the Seminole Nation, Kaw Nation, Delaware Nation of Oklahoma, Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma and his own Comanche Nation.

Burgess began at Pawnee Nation College in 2012 as a faculty member, teaching American Indian studies and business management. He also served as chairman of the curriculum committee and budget and finance committee and was adviser to the Student Government Association and the fundraising subcommittee.

From 2009 to 2011, he was chairman/chief executive of the Comanche Nation, leading the Comanches to the first balanced budget in more than 18 years.

Burgess also has worked as director of human resources for the Comanche Housing Authority, director of Workforce Investment Act/Tribal Employment Rights Office for the Seminole Nation, director of health and wellness center for the Kaw Nation and director of grants and developments for the Comanche Nation. He was tribal administrator for both the Comanches and Delaware.

His early career included time in education as both an adjunct professor for Cal State University in Long Beach, California, and as programs director for American University’s Washington Internships for Native Students. He also was an education programs director and interim executive director for the Native American Journalist Association.

Burgess has a long history of community service. He has been Comanche Nation chairman, an election board member and on the Comanche Business Council as committeeman No. 2. He also was a member of the Los Angeles Unified School District Indian Education Board, a member of the Presbyterian Outreach for Indians, a member of the Los Angeles City/County American Indian Commission, a member of the Golden State Gourd Dance club and a member of the Minorities in the Media publishing project.

The Pawnee Nation College, which has been open since 2006, is chartered by the Pawnee Nation Business Council. It is housed on the campus of a former Indian Boarding School, the Pawnee Industrial School, which the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs established in the late 1800s.

The college currently offers eight different programs of study. It is affiliated with the Nebraska Indian Community College, Oklahoma State University’s agriculture extension and food science department, Langston University’s agriculture science department and, to a small extent, the University of Oklahoma and its Native American Studies programs.

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**PHIL BUSEY**

**FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN AND CEO**

**DELAWARE RESOURCE GROUP OF OKLAHOMA**

Since Phil Busey founded Delaware Resource Group of Oklahoma in 2002, he has helped grow it into one of the largest global defense contractors in the region. The Oklahoma City company employs more than 850 people around the world, 500 of whom are military veterans. DRG has operations in over 125 locations – 43 U.S. states and nine other countries.

Busey is founder, chairman and CEO of DRG, and his company works with both the U.S. military and other aerospace and defense businesses, including Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

Delaware Resource Group supports U.S. military fourth- and fifth-generation fighter programs with more than 200 personnel, and it has provided training support to U.S. Air Force Air Combat Command fighter programs for over 10 years. To date, DRG has provided training to thousands of U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps troops and foreign nation military personnel.

Busey said the company continues to grow thanks to the relationships it prioritizes in its dealings.

“We never considered not growing,” Busey said. “We have built our business on relationships. People say, ‘you’re a government contractor, so you just win contracts.’ No, it’s about relationships.”

Prior to founding DRG in 2002, Busey practiced law for more than 25 years, working for large law firms in commercial, corporate, federal regulation and Native American law, also teaching more than 150 continuing legal education classes on contracting, business and leadership.

Busey credits his diverse career experience, good mentors and a strong team as driving and shaping his business and his leadership philosophy.

“We wouldn’t be where we are if it wasn’t for the people we have and the people that have helped us,” Busey said. “I love doing what I’m doing, and it took a long time to get to this point.”

DRG’s success story includes the entire Busey family. His sons, Philip and Brian, are both DRG employees, and his wife, Cathy, has been long involved with the company. His daughter Emily is the CEO of Cardinal Point LLC, a DRG subsidiary.

Busey has both his undergraduate and law degrees from Oklahoma City University.

He has spent his career active in Native American affairs and is both a Cherokee and Delaware.

He was the recipient of The Journal Record Legacy Award in May 2021.
Linda Capps holds the second-highest elected position in the tribal government for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, serving as vice chairman in the tribe’s executive branch. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation is a federally recognized tribe, headquartered in Shawnee, and represents more than 37,000 tribal members.

Capps has been an elected official for the nation since 1987, was elected to the vice president position in 1990 and has worked full time for the tribe in conjunction with her duties as vice chairman.

Capps holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and a Master of Science degree in education from the University of Central Oklahoma. In 2014, she received an honorary doctorate in humanities from Oklahoma Baptist University.

From 1976 to 1984, she worked as a high school business teacher and Indian education director at Dover public schools and Tecumseh public schools, respectively. From 1987 to 1997, she served as a government contracting specialist with the Oklahoma Bid Assistance Program before joining Gordon Cooper Technology Center as an adult education instructor.

Linda Capps is a board member for the First National Bank & Trust Co. and a former board member for the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City and its Oklahoma City bank branch. She served on the Federal Reserve’s Community Development Advisory Council. She also served on boards for the Gordon Cooper Technology Center Foundation and Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma.

Capps was named the City of Tecumseh’s 2012 Citizen of the Year and a 2010 inductee in the Gordon Cooper Technology Center Hall of Fame. In 1997, the U.S. Small Business Administration named her its Minority of the Year advocate.

Prior to joining Crowe & Dunlevy, Buzzard clerked for U.S. District Court Judge Jeffrey L. Viken in Rapid City, South Dakota, helping the judge resolve civil and criminal cases, including 13 trials on matters ranging from a car collision to first-degree murders and child sexual assaults in Indian Country.

Buzzard has a law degree from Yale Law School and a bachelor’s degree in Native American studies from Dartmouth College, where he graduated cum laude, was on the College Honor List, served as president of the Native Americans at Dartmouth student organization and was a recipient of the Bill and Melinda Gates Millennium Scholarship.

While a student at Yale Law, Buzzard served as president of the Native American Law Students Association. He also published a research piece regarding the effects of the opioid epidemic in Indian Country. He provided pro bono legal and policy research to tribes and tribal organizations on matters that included the reassertion of ceded tribal criminal jurisdiction, the implementation of the Violence Against Women Act’s tribal jurisdictional provisions and the Dakota Access pipeline litigation.

Greg Buzzard is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and an associate at Crowe & Dunlevy, where he practices as a member of the firm’s Indian Law and Gaming Practice Group. He advises and represents tribal and nontribal clients on all manner of Indian law issues in tribal, state and federal forums.

Working with his Crowe & Dunlevy colleagues, Buzzard has secured recognition of a tribe’s reservation under McGirt v. Oklahoma in state district court, represented a tribe in multimillion-dollar state court litigation and represented nontribal clients in tribal court and before tribal administrative agencies. He has spoken at private and public events on Indian law issues, including an engagement at the 2021 Oklahoma Bar Association annual meeting.

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Buzzard also is a dedicated student of the Cherokee language and is proud to participate in the language’s revitalization.

Crowe & Dunlevy has provided comprehensive legal services for more than a century. It has offices in Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Dallas and offers counsel in 30 practice areas.
Jason Holuby is a recognized leader in the architectural, engineering and construction community, advocating for strong, culturally meaningful design that improves the lives of First Americans. Throughout his career, Holuby always has focused on the smallest details of design and on ensuring that his work positively affects those in the communities he serves.

A citizen of the Muscogee Nation, Holuby has worked with Native American tribes for the last 15 years and is passionate about being a strategic partner with them to support the development of their communities. His work and client relationships have created ongoing, multi-project legacies with the Chickasaw, Choctaw and Muscogee nations as well as the Cheyenne and Arapaho, Otoe-Missouria, Shawnee, Ponca and Peoria tribes. To his work, he brings well-respected problem-solving skills, leadership, understanding of tribal cultures and innovation.

In 2017, Holuby was named president and majority owner of the newly formed New Fire Native Design Group, an affiliate of FSB in Oklahoma City. Through its collaborations with Native American clients, New Fire Native has worked to improve the quality of life for Native Americans through the master planning, design and construction of much-needed cultural, community, health care, education and industrial projects. Holuby has led more than 100 projects, including high-end hospitality, cultural, gaming and community-based endeavors. His award-winning designs range from $1 million to $220 million and include the tribal headquarters complex for the Choctaw Nation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Master Plan, Chickasaw Nation Visitor Center and the Shawnee Tribe Heritage Center.

Holuby currently serves on Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt’s Minority Business Council, working to ensure that Native Americans and other minorities have access to increased business opportunities within the state and to make Oklahoma a more inclusive business environment for people of all ethnicities and backgrounds. He also serves on the Advisory Council for the Carlisle Indian School Project, a nonprofit group focused on honoring the students who attended the Carlisle Indian Industrial School and bringing awareness of the far-reaching effects of the government boarding school era.

He is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma, Leadership OKC and Leadership Native Oklahoma and has served on the State Board of the American Indian Chamber of Commerce, Central Oklahoma Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Oklahoma City Foundation for Architecture and the Professional Advisory Board for the Oklahoma Native American Technology Council.

Holuby holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Oklahoma and is a licensed architect, LEED Accredited Professional and a member of the American Institute of Architects.

Lisa Johnson-Billy has spent her political and business careers promoting the rich authentic history of the Chickasaw people. She currently is serving a fourth term in the Chickasaw Nation Legislature and is the current secretary/vice chair, which is the equivalent of the state Legislature’s speaker pro tempore.

From 2004-2016, Johnson-Billy served in the Oklahoma Legislature, where she was majority floor leader in the last two years of her term. She was deputy whip and vice chair of the Republican Caucus, appropriations chairman for public safety and higher education’s appropriations and budget committees and committee chairman for federal-tribal relations. She founded the Oklahoma Legislative Native American Caucus.

In 2019, Johnson-Billy was Oklahoma’s Cabinet secretary for Native American affairs. In addition to her current term in the Chickasaw Legislature, she also was a member of the same legislature from 1996 to 2002.

Johnson-Billy has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northeastern State University, where she double-majored in business merchandising and arts, and she holds a master’s degree in education from the University of Oklahoma.

Peacemakers Inc., the business she owned from 1988 to 1995, incorporated Native culture with a healthy lifestyle and included mentoring and building youth-led community action plans throughout North America.

In 2018, the U.S. Senate approved Billy-Johnson’s nomination as a Udall Foundation board member. Established by Congress in 1992, the foundation is an independent executive branch agency that honors its namesake Morris K. Udall’s influence on the environment, public lands and natural resources and his support of the rights and self-governance of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Its work focuses on the environment and environmental policy research as well as health care and tribal public policy.

Billy-Johnson also has served on the U.S. Commission on Native Children and was chairman of the American Legislative Exchange Council’s Justice Performance Project, a national legislative committee. She was featured as one of artist d.g. smalling’s seven women of distinction in his 2020 “Lady Justice” series of paintings. Among many other accolades, Johnson-Billy was honored as an NSU distinguished alumnus in 2018, received an honorary degree from the Future Farmers of America in 2018 and was named Woman of the Year for Changing Winds Cultural Society in 2017. The Chickasaw Nation inducted her into its Hall of Fame in 2009.

Johnson-Billy and her husband, Phillip, have been married for 30 years. He is a U.S. Air Force veteran, and their three children serve in U.S. military branches, too. The couple are active at the Landmark Church in Purcell and the Cornerstone Indian Baptist Church in Little Axe.
A dentist by vocation, Dr. R. Stephen Jones serves as the executive director for Cherokee Nation Health Services and oversees an array of services, health centers and a hospital, all located across the 14-county jurisdictional boundaries of the Cherokee Nation in northeastern Oklahoma.

These include the Cherokee Nation W.W. Hastings Hospital and nine outpatient health centers, along with services provided by the Emergency Medical Services; the Jack Brown Adolescent Treatment Center, an employee health center; Cherokee Nation Public Health Department and numerous preventive health programs. Under Jones’ direction, Cherokee Nation Health Services completed construction of the nation’s largest Indian Health Services joint venture project in Indian Country.

Jones graduated in 1992 from the University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry and started his dental career with the Cherokee Nation as the first hired tribal clinical dentist at the Redbird Smith Dental Clinic in Sallisaw. After two years, Jones transferred to his hometown of Stilwell and helped establish the tribal dental program at the Wilma P. Mankiller Dental Clinic. In 1996, Jones joined his father, Dr. Gary Jones, in private practice in Stilwell, where he gained knowledge of the business side of health care. He continued practicing in the private sector in Stilwell and Tahlequah until 2012, when he returned to the Cherokee Nation as the senior dental director.

In 2018, former Principal Chief Bill John Baker appointed Jones as interim executive director of Cherokee Nation Health Services. Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. confirmed him as executive director in 2020.

Jones is a Cherokee citizen and a lifelong resident of northeastern Oklahoma. He has been recognized for his management accomplishments and improvements within the Cherokee Nation Dental Program by being awarded the Cherokee Nation Health Services’ prestigious Five Pillar Award for Excellence and the Oklahoma Area Indian Health Service Area Director’s Superior Management Award. He also received the Fred C. Seids Award for Outstanding Pediatric Dentistry. In addition, Jones is a J. Dean Robertson Society Fellow, past president of the Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce and a member of Cornerstone Fellowship Church. He has three children and one grandchild.

Cory Littlepage, a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, founded Tribal Diagnostics in October 2015 to provide affordable laboratory tests to health care providers and patients in underserved communities, particularly Indian Country.

As CEO, Littlepage is responsible for the strategic growth and operations of the company. Since Tribal Diagnostics’ opening, about 1,300 providers and two dozen tribes, urban clinics and Indian Health Service facilities have enrolled to use its services. The company has seen double-digit organic growth each year and conducted more than 3 million laboratory tests.

Littlepage has more than two decades of experience in the health care field, starting at Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, where he worked from 2001 to 2012, quickly rising through the ranks of multiple departments. He started out in human resources operations and later was promoted to business operations, where he oversaw pharmaceutical operations for more than 200 representatives and $500 in annual sales. His territory included Missouri and Kentucky from 2010 to 2011 and Texas in 2012.

Just before founding Tribal Diagnostics, Littlepage worked for a private equity portfolio company, Expert Global Solutions, for nearly four years, performing merger integration work. Based on his performance, he was promoted to lead the largest health care account for EGS, effectively coordinating the efforts of 2,400 EGS colleagues across 10 international locations, and directly responsible for strategic growth and performance.

Littlepage holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Kansas and a Master of Business Administration degree in finance from Southern Methodist University.

Tribal Diagnostics conducts high-volume and specialized tests as well as hundreds of laboratory tests related to diabetes, heart disease, opioids, oncology, infectious disease to include COVID-19 and others. Eighty percent of its customers are non-Native. The company is owned and operated by Native Americans. The American Indian Chamber of Commerce Oklahoma named Tribal Diagnostics its 2021 Small Business of the Year. In 2016, Tribal Diagnostic was named the Oklahoma Minority Enterprise Development’s Start-up of the Year.

Littlepage is a board member for the Oklahoma and North Texas region of the American Cancer Society and previously served Stonewall Community Church’s Special Needs Ministry. The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development named Littlepage one of its Native American 40 Under 40 Award winners in 2016. He has been married for 16 years and has three daughters.
Neal McCaleb’s career as a civil engineer spans more than 60 years in private practice and in public service at the city, state and federal levels. At the state level, he helped develop the Oklahoma turnpike system, advocated for funding of highways and bridges and oversaw the implementation of the $800 million Highway Capital Improvement Program that the state Legislature passed in 1999.

Neal is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, is current board chairman for Chickasaw Nation Industries and has been board chairman for the Chickasaw Community Bank. In 2013, he was appointed ambassador at large for the Chickasaws.

McCaleb graduated from Oklahoma A&M College in 1957 and for two years joined a consulting engineering firm that was involved in the design and development of Oklahoma’s interstate highway system in Oklahoma. He left that position for the Oklahoma City Engineering Department, ultimately serving as assistant city engineer before starting his own consulting engineering firm in 1961.

In 1974, he was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives and served eight years in the Legislature, including four years as a Republican floor leader. He later served 10 years as Oklahoma’s secretary of transportation, first under Oklahoma Gov. Henry Bellmon and then under Gov. Frank Keating. He concurrently served as director of the state Transportation Department for both appointments, and in addition, under Keating, as director of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority.

In 1974, he was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives and served eight years in the Legislature, including four years as a Republican floor leader. He later served 10 years as Oklahoma’s secretary of transportation, first under Oklahoma Gov. Henry Bellmon and then under Gov. Frank Keating. He concurrently served as director of the state Transportation Department for both appointments, and in addition, under Keating, as director of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority.

Sheila Morago is executive director of the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association, a position she has held since 2011. She is a member of the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. Prior to working for OIGA, Morago was executive director for the Arizona Indian Gaming Association from 2004-2011. In Arizona, Morago was credited for fostering an environment of mutual respect among all the tribes, the state and the federal government, which allowed Arizona to maintain its national visibility as the model for Indian gaming.

Morago served as director of public relations for the National Indian Gaming Association, based in Washington. She was recruited from NIGA to be the tribal liaison for Arizonans for Fair Gaming & Indian Self Reliance Act’s Prop 202 campaign, where she coordinated all efforts between Proposition 202’s campaign office and the 17 tribes belonging to the coalition as well as the tribal casino operations. In her capacity as tribal liaison, Morago also designed and managed the successful outreach effort for Prop 202 in Arizona Indian Country.

Morago began her career in tribal gaming in 1994, when she was appointed director of marketing for the Gila River Casinos. From 1994 to 1998, she created the marketing department for this multimillion-dollar enterprise and opened two successful tribal casinos.

Before joining AIGA, Morago was vice president of national relations for initial impressions based in Tempe, Arizona. In that position, she was responsible for all political and public relations for tribal and nontribal clients.

Morago was raised on the Gila River Indian Reservation and graduated from high school in Casa Grande, Arizona. She attended the University of Arizona, where she studied business administration and management.

In 2006, “Global Gaming Business” named her one of its 25 people to watch, and “Casino Enterprise Management” named her the “Great Women of Gaming” in 2004. She was inducted into Indian Gaming Magazine’s Indian Gaming Hall of Fame in 2012. In 2018, she received a Modern Day Warrior Award from OIGA.

The Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association was established in 1986 as a nonprofit organization of Indian nations and nonvoting associate members that represent organizations, tribes and businesses engaged in tribal gaming enterprises in Oklahoma. The common commitment and purpose of OIGA are to advance the welfare of Indian peoples economically, socially and politically. The annual OIGA Conference attracts more than 2,500 industry professionals, including tribal gaming operators, tribal gaming employees, tribal leaders and vendors, who gather to do business, learn best practices and network.
Kimberly Pearson became chief operations officer for Osage Casinos in February, but she has served the seven-property gaming and entertainment organization in key roles for the last 13 years. She joined the organization in 2008 to focus on training and leadership development, and her team-building skills have given her the ability to cultivate relationships throughout the casino and beyond. She has played integral roles in communications with the Osage Nation government, the Osage Nation Gaming Enterprise Board and the Osage Nation Gaming Commission.

She was also a key player during the development of the Tulsa location that opened in 2018, which gives her a great perspective as the tribe considers future locations. According to IndianGaming.com, Pearson helped build programs to improve performance and drive revenue while identifying management and staff opportunities. In doing so, she has enhanced the Osage Nation assets with land acquisition for future casinos in addition to revenue.

“Reservation land acquisition is vital to the future of Osage Casinos,” Pearson said. “My team is extremely forward-thinking.”

A member of the Osage Nation, Pearson understands the importance of her role at Osage Casinos and how it affects programs and funding for the nation. Pearson holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Southern Nazarene University and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree from Oklahoma State University. Prior to joining the Osage Nation, she was vice president of student loan sales and marketing for Bank of Oklahoma for two years and operations manager for Nelnet, which administers and services student loans.

The Osage Nation uses revenues from the Osage Casinos to fund tribal government and programs, provide for the general welfare of the tribe and its members, promote tribal economic development, support charitable organizations and help fund operations of local government agencies of the Osage Nation.
After years of serving his Muscogee (Creek) Nation as a cabinet member and working in business, Elijah McIntosh formed his own consulting firm to focus on organizational strategies, business operations, accounting practices, economic impact strategies, tribal affairs, community relations and public policy.

He has been the CEO of McIntosh Consulting LLC in Tahlequah since February 2020. Immediately prior to that, he was CEO of Onefire Holding Co. LLC in Jenks, for which he was primary negotiator and oversaw the day-to-day operations of 14 business entities, including the Riverwalk property in Jenks.

McIntosh has a bachelor’s degree in finance from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah and an associate degree in psychology from Connors State College in Warner. At Northeastern State, he won the Entrepreneurship Club’s Student Activity Award; at Connors he was the Student Senate president, and the faculty voted him top male graduate. He is also a graduate of the Harvard Business School Executive Education Program.

He has been chairman of the Oklahoma Tribal Finance Consortium, a member of Oklahoma State University’s tribal finance and accounting advisory board and a panelist for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce’s Tribal Economic Development Council. In 2018, The Journal Record named him an Achiever Under 40. He also has been a presenter at the Northeast Oklahoma Regional Alliance’s Leadership Day.

From 2004 to 2008, McIntosh served as an ammunition technician for the U.S. Marine Corps, earning the rank of sergeant before he was honorably discharged. He served as principal examiner of the National Credit Union Administration in Tulsa and Little Rock, Arkansas, from 2013 to 2017 as a federal examiner of state and federal chartered credit unions.

In 2017, he became secretary of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and secretary of commerce, reporting as a cabinet member directly to the tribal chief. In his two years there, his responsibilities expanded from supervising two departments with six employees to overseeing six departments with more than 60 employees as a result of his success at improving performance.

While working for the Muscogee Nation, McIntosh coordinated its 2017 economic impact study and was the lead in forming a partnership with Tinker Federal Credit Union to develop a financial literacy program for the summer youth and employees. He also served on a variety of boards, committees and other assignments for the tribe.

GableGotwals’ expanding Native American Law Practice is comprised of dedicated attorneys, including many tribal citizens, who are committed to representing Native American tribes and business entities. We work with tribal leaders, governmental agencies, business councils, tribal artists, and gaming entities.

We aim to:
- Protect tribal sovereignty
- Preserve traditional languages and culture
- Grow tribal businesses
- Advise gaming operations
- Implement cybersecurity defenses
- Conduct confidential internal investigations
- Interact with federal law enforcement
- Facilitate inter-governmental relations
- Expand delivery of tribal healthcare and telehealth services

Our team has successfully argued for indigenous rights before the United States Supreme Court, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, and even at the United Nations. We approach our mission to provide tribal clients with direct access to experienced Native American law practitioners and specialized services. We are proud to serve tribal governments, gaming operations, and support tribal economic development.

How can we serve you?
www.GableLaw.com
James Pepper Henry is director and CEO of the newly opened First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City. The museum, which opened to sellout crowds in September 2021, shares the cultures, diversity, history and contributions of the 39 federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma today from a unique, first-person perspective.

Before joining FAM in 2017, Pepper Henry was executive director of Tulsa’s Gilcrease Museum and co-led the successful $65 million campaign to update and expand the facility. Pepper Henry also served as a commissioner on the Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission and was a key proponent and facilitator to establish “Native American Day” as an official city of Tulsa day of recognition.

Prior to the Gilcrease Museum, Pepper Henry was director and CEO of the distinguished Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, where he developed programming and exhibitions that significantly increased visitor numbers and membership. He was the first enrolled Native American to be at the helm of the 83-year-old institution.

From 2007 to 2013, Pepper Henry was director and CEO of the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, Alaska’s art, history and science institution. He oversaw completion of the museum’s $110 million, 80,000-square-foot expansion, including the debut of the new Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center exhibition hall and the new Imaginarium Discovery Center.

Pepper Henry is a former associate director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian where, for nearly 10 years, he managed a wide variety of Native American community-oriented programs, services and traveling exhibitions. Pepper Henry played a pivotal role in the establishment and launch of the American Indian museum on the National Mall in Washington that opened to the public in 2004.

Pepper Henry is a citizen of the Kaw Nation of Oklahoma and of Muscogee (Creek) heritage. He is the inaugural director of the Kaw Nation’s Kanza Museum. He is a graduate of the University of Oregon and a recipient of the university’s prestigious Council for Minority Education Leadership Award. He is also a graduate of the Museum Leadership Institute at the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Pepper Henry has contributed essays to various publications including “Stewards of the Sacred,” co-published by the American Association of Museums and Harvard University, and “Native Universe: Voices of Indian America,” co-published by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Geographic Society.

Monte Randall has spent much of his career in service to his tribe, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and its college in Okmulgee. Currently the fifth president of the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN), Randall began his career with the college in 2009. He also has served as the college’s dean of academic affairs, dean of student affairs, tribal services instructor and a research specialist.

Randall became president this year after serving as secretary of education and training for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation since 2020. While at CMN, he has developed federal financial aid policies and the Office of Student Affairs and the academic assessment plan, and he contributed to its accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission. The public college, and the only tribal college in Oklahoma, is the nation’s institution of higher education, emphasizing native culture, values, language and self-determination.

Randall is a Muscogee (Creek) from the Talladega Tribal Town and Deer Clan. He also is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and the Oklahoma Army National Guard and served as a wildland firefighter for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Okmulgee from 2001 to 2007. He has a doctorate in educational leadership from Oral Roberts University, a Master of Arts degree in Native American studies from the University of Oklahoma, and bachelor’s and associate degrees in business administration from the Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas.

His research interest focuses on Native American culture, problem-solving abilities and leadership. In 2008, Randall was a Mvskoke language researcher for the Muscogee Nation’s Language Program. He is an Aspen Institute and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow and contributor to the Tribal College Journal. Randall is a member of the American Educational Research Association, American Legion, Council on Student Affairs, Kappa Delta Pi National Educational Honor Society and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Randall serves as a volunteer firefighter for the Glenpool Fire Department and a member of the Mvskoke Nation Honor Guard and is CEO and founder of the SONS of Mvskoke. He has been a member of the tribe’s emergency response team and chairman and a member of the MCN Warriors Honor Women initiative. He was head coach for the Glenpool Elementary and Middle School girls basketball teams from 2012 to 2015 and has been an MCN Lighthorse Police Explorer Post 106 youth adviser. He taught the Mvskoke language from 2012 to 2014 as part of the Glenpool Creek Indian Community, for which he also served as sergeant at arms and youth activities coordinator. He has been active in the Glenpool School District since 2010, serving on the Indian Education Parent Committee as vice chairman and as an elected board member.

Randall lives in Glenpool with his wife, Lauren, and three children.
For T.W. Shannon, CEO of Chickasaw Community Bank, the statistics that reflect the success of the bank, and the community support the bank offers its customers, are deeply personal.

Chickasaw Community Bank is a full-service financial institution wholly owned by the Chickasaw Nation. It offers a diverse array of financial products and lending services to individuals and businesses across the region, while paying tribute to the culture and history of the Chickasaw Nation. Its mission is to help enhance the overall quality of life for Chickasaw people and to be a good neighbor within Oklahoma and beyond.

Under Shannon’s leadership, the bank has processed the highest amount of Section 184 loans — called the Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program — in the country. These loans provide Native American and Alaskan American tribal members with access to mortgage financing. The bank partnered with its neighboring tribe, the Cherokee Nation, to fund more than 600 rent-to-own, multi-generational homes for displaced tribal families. In 2017, the bank funded a transformational housing project in Washington state to build 45 housing units for Native American families seeking sobriety and regaining children from foster care.

The bank’s guiding principle is “Building Better Lives for Everyone!” This mission ensures the bank stays dedicated to its people and the community while it focuses on the idea of the home. As part of it, employees have unlimited paid volunteer hours, and the bank aims to create a culture of care that involves being more than just bankers.

Prior to pursuing a career in business, Shannon was in public service, elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 2006 as a Republican from Lawton and then becoming speaker in 2013 at age 34. At the time, he was the youngest speaker in the country and was the first Chickasaw and African American to do so in Oklahoma.

He serves as a board member for the Center for Urban Renewal and Education, a Washington think tank focused on culture, race and poverty. He is a member of Oklahoma City University’s board, an Oklahoma Department of Transportation commissioner and on the boards for the Civic Center Foundation, Leadership Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Bankers Association and the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

He has a bachelor’s degree in communication from Cameron University in Lawton and a law degree from Oklahoma City University. Shannon has been married to his wife, Devon, for 20 years.

Trent Shores is a former U.S. attorney who is nationally recognized for his efforts to develop and implement strategic responses to Native American policy. He currently practices law as a shareholder for GableGotwals.

At the time the Supreme Court issued the landmark McGirt decision affecting the definition of tribal lands in Oklahoma, Shores was the individual tasked with managing the implementation of the decision for the U.S. government. Now in the private sector, he is working with various Native American tribes.

Shores, a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, served as chairman of the U.S. Attorney General’s Native American Issues Subcommittee charged with developing and guiding national policy for Indian Country justice and related matters. In that capacity, he established a national initiative to address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people and led a presidential task force investigating the Indian Health Service. He also served on the Attorney General’s Advisory Committee, where he represented all U.S. attorneys in the 10th Circuit and provided counsel and advice on national policy matters and the operations of the Justice Department.

Shores also has testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the U.S. Sentencing Commission. He previously worked as the tribal liaison for the U.S. Attorney’s Office, ensuring the Justice Department upheld its federal trust responsibility to federally recognized tribes and leading investigations into public corruption, embezzlement from tribal gaming operations and a variety of violent crime violations. He has represented the United States at the United Nations and Organization of American States, arguing for the recognition of basic human rights for Indigenous peoples worldwide.

GableGotwals is a full-service law firm of 100 attorneys and more than 60 professionals with offices in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Though Oklahoma-based, the firm represents a diversified client base across the nation. Its connections and reach are global. Fortune 500 corporations, privately owned companies, entrepreneurs, foundations and individuals entrust the firm with the stewardship and strategic management of their legal challenges.
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Carmelita Wamego Skeeter has been with the Indian Health Care Resource Center in Tulsa since its beginning 45 years ago. In 1976, Skeeter helped survey residents to assess the health needs of the local Indian population. When survey results showed the medical needs of Tulsa’s Native Americans were not being met, she was hired as one of the center’s original four employees. At the time, the agency provided referral services only but began offering medical services within a year. Throughout her tenure, Skeeter has served in different roles, including clinic administrator, and has been CEO since 1989.

Skeeter is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and advocates strongly for Native American and minority health needs. She got involved in health care because of her childhood, when she was in a caregiver role as the oldest of 13 children. She feels responsible to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, to seek help for those who do not know where to begin and to advocate for equality when others are afraid to speak up.

During the past 45 years, Skeeter has received many awards, including the Kenneth Anquoe Lifetime Achievement Dream Keeper Award in 2021; Dan Allen Social Justice Award in 2016; the Maxine Ciesel Homer Spirit of Community Excellence Award in 2003; and Women of the Year Pinnacle Award winner. The Oklahoma Native American Business Development Center in 1988 recognized her for “Outstanding Community Leadership of the Year” and, in 1999, she received an award for significant contributions in improving the health of American Indian and Alaska Natives presented by the National Indian Health Board. In 2002, the National Council of Urban Indian Health recognized the resource center with its “Outstanding Program of the Year” award. The city of Tulsa proclaimed a “Carmelita Skeeter Day” in 2019, the YWCA named her one of its 100 Women of Moxie in 2014, and Women in Communications named her an annual newsmaker in 2011.

The Indian Health Care Resource Center of Tulsa Inc. seeks to provide quality, comprehensive health care to Tulsa-area Indian people in a culturally sensitive manner that promotes good health, well-being and harmony. It offers a full range of health and wellness services tailored to the Indian community, including medical, optometry, dental, pharmacy, transportation, behavioral health, health education and wellness, substance abuse treatment and prevention and youth programs focused on traditions, health and leadership skills. The center has more than 18,000 active patients representing more than 125 tribes. The Indian Health Care Resource Center is accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Centers (AAAHC) and certified as a Medical Home by the AAAHC.
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### Kent Smith

**Associate Dean**
**Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine**

Kent Smith serves as associate dean for Oklahoma State University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine at two campuses, Tulsa and Tahlequah. In Tulsa, he is associate dean for the Office of American Indians in Medicine and Science. In Tahlequah, he is associate dean for the first tribally affiliated medical school in the country with the Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah. Smith, who has a doctorate in zoology from the University of Oklahoma, is also a professor of anatomy and director of clinical anatomy in the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology at the OSU Center for Health Sciences. He is Comanche and Chickasaw and also has Cherokee heritage.

Smith is part of the leadership of the Native Explorers Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Oklahoma City, which provides research and educational programs and promotes partnerships with the goal of increasing the number of Native Americans in science and medicine. Research programs include the Native Explorers Program at OSU’s Center for Health Sciences in Tulsa, which is designed around the disciplines of anatomy and vertebrate paleontology to provide an array of hands-on, off-campus activities to introduce American Indians ages 18 and over to Western science and medicine and coalesce these with traditional ways and culture.

Since earning his doctorate, Smith’s research has focused on the evolution of mammals with particular emphasis on taxonomy, systematics and paleobiogeography, primarily emphasizing late Cenozoic mammals collected from the Basin and Range, Colorado Plateau and the interior highlands of North America. He engages underrepresented minority undergraduate and graduate students regularly to help him in his field expeditions and research.

In 2018, Smith received the Kenneth Anquoe Lifetime Achievement Award. He was the 2015 inaugural recipient of the Raymond M. Alf Award for Excellence in Paleontological Research and Education. He has been recognized with numerous Regents Distinguished Teaching Awards. Smith is a member of many professional societies, including being a founding member of American Indian Science and Engineering Society’s Full-Circle Mentorship Program; a founding member of the American Indian Graduate Center, Rising Native Graduates Coaches; and a founding member of Association of American Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, Council of Diversity and Equity. He is a member of the Tribal Health Subcommittee, Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes, a member of the board of directors of Red Earth Inc., and a founding member of Southwest Oklahoma STEM Alliance, which includes the Comanche, Kiowa, Wichita and Affiliated Tribes and public schools within these tribal reservations/jurisdictions.

### Robyn Sunday-Allen

**CEO**
**Oklahoma City Indian Clinic**

Robyn Sunday-Allen has served as CEO of the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic since 2009, but she has been with the clinic for much longer. She began her career there as a registered nurse, became the director of nursing soon afterward and was promoted to chief operating officer in 2001.

Incorporated in 1974 as a nonprofit, the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic has a mission to increase access to quality health care and wellness services and produce positive health care outcomes for urban American Indians living in central Oklahoma. It is a contractor of the Indian Health Service.

Sunday-Allen, who is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, has a bachelor’s degree in psychology, a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing and a Master of Public Health degree in health administration and policy from the University of Oklahoma.

She is vice president of the board of directors for the National Council of Urban Indian Health and serves on the board for New View Oklahoma. She also has served on the board for the State Chamber of Oklahoma, and she is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma City Class XXIX and Leadership Oklahoma Class XXVI. She has advocated for Indian health before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

The Indian Health Service has honored Sunday-Allen with its Indian Health Service’s Lifetime Achievement Award and Luana Reyes Leadership Award. She also has been recognized as one of The Journal Record’s 50 Making a Difference honorees in 2009, 2010 and 2012. She was one of The Journal Record’s Oklahoma’s Most Admired CEO honorees from 2009 to 2011 and was inducted into that honor’s Circle of Excellence. An Oklahoma proclamation from Gov. Brad Henry declared Nov. 14 as Robyn Sunday-Allen Day.

Sunday-Allen is married to Russell Allen, and they have one son, Eli.
Mia Tahdooahnippah is CEO of Comanche Nation Entertainment, leading the company’s 750 team members in four casinos and multiple travel plazas throughout southwest Oklahoma. A firm believer that hospitality is the cornerstone for success in the gaming industry, she is responsible for overall operations at all Comanche Nation Entertainment properties, and her achievements include creating and implementing the company’s first-ever training and development program.

She has worked with Comanche Nation Entertainment since 2014, first serving as director of training and development, then moving to general manager of Comanche Spur Casino in Elgin. She became Comanche Nation Entertainment’s CEO in 2019.

Prior to joining Comanche Nation Entertainment, Tahdooahnippah was the Comanche Nation Gaming Commission’s compliance director. Her work in gaming regulations helped develop her passion for hospitality and her vision that gaming resources address immediate needs of tribal members and the future of the community.

Tahdooahnippah formalized the company’s giving initiatives to create the Comanche Cares program, which has provided nearly $1.5 million in resources to Oklahoma communities and families. Volunteers have distributed food, provided holiday gifts, paid for road improvements and invested in water supply systems throughout southwest Oklahoma.

Most recently, Tahdooahnippah led Comanche Nation Entertainment through one of the most challenging times in its history. During the coronavirus pandemic, she directed a complete evaluation of health and safety protocols at each property and invested more than $1 million in upgrades to improve air quality, social distancing and overall sanitation. Through temporary closure, she ensured that all 750 employees received their pay and benefits, provided food to employees and their families and completely remodeled operations at her properties. Under her leadership, operations have fully resumed with no additional closures.

Tahdooahnippah has been recognized many times for her leadership in the gaming industry. In 2021, The Journal Record recognized her as one of Oklahoma’s Most Admired CEOs and as a Fifty Making a Difference honoree. In 2019, she received the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association’s Chairman’s Award. In 2015, the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development named her one of its “Native American 40 Under 40” award recipients. In 2012, the National Indian Gaming Commission appointed her to its tribal advisory committee to assist in the review of proposed federal gaming laws.

Tahdooahnippah holds a bachelor’s degree in international business from the University of Oklahoma and a master’s degree in hospitality administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Tahdooahnippah is a citizen of the Comanche Nation. She is married with five children.
Jerod Impichchaachaaha’ Tate is an American Indian classical composer and citizen of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, dedicated to the development of American Indian classical composition. He expresses his Native culture in symphonic music, ballet and opera, and his works have been commissioned by major North American orchestras, ensembles and organizations and performed throughout the world. The U.S. Department of State appointed him its 2021 cultural ambassador. He also is guest composer, conductor and pianist for the San Francisco Symphony Currents Program “Thunder Song: American Indian Musical Cultures.” He recently was guest composer for the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Balcony Bar Program “Home with ETHEL and Friends,” which featured his commissioned work “Pisachi (Reveal)” for String Quartet."

Other recent commissions include “Shell Shaker: A Chickasaw Opera” for Mount Holyoke Symphony Orchestra; “Ghost of the White Deer, Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra,” for Dallas Symphony Orchestra; and “Hózhó (Navajo Strong)" and “thirálni (I Know)” for White Snake Opera Co. His music was recently featured on the HBO series Westworld.

Tate’s commissioned works have been performed by the National Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony and Chorus, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Oklahoma City Philharmonic and many others.

Tate has held composer-in-residence positions for Music Alive, a national residency program of the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA; the Joyce Foundation/American Composers Forum; Oklahoma City’s NeVoView Summer Academy; Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation; and Grand Canyon Music Festival Native American Composer Apprentice Project. Tate was the founding composition instructor for the Chickasaw Summer Arts Academy and has taught composition to American Indian high school students in Minneapolis, the Hopi, Navajo and Lummi reservations and Native students in Toronto.

He is a three-time commissioned recipient from the American Composers Forum, a Chamber Music America’s Classical Commissioning Program recipient, a Cleveland Institute of Music Alumni Achievement Award recipient, a governor-appointed Creativity Ambassador for the state of Oklahoma and an Emmy Award winner for his work on the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority documentary “The Science of Composing.”

In addition to his work based upon his Chickasaw culture, Tate has worked with the music and language of multiple tribes: Choctaw, Navajo, Cherokee, Ojibway, Creek, Pechanga, Comanche, Lakota, Hopi, Tongva, Shawnee, Caddo, Ute, Aleut, Shoshone, Cree, Paiute and Salish/Kootenai. Tate earned his bachelor’s degree in piano performance from Northwestern University and his master’s degree in piano performance and composition from the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has performed as First Keyboard on the Broadway national tours of Les Misérables and Miss Saigon and been a guest pianist and accompanist for the Colorado Ballet, Hartford Ballet and numerous ballet and dance companies.
Healthy cheese biz taps into local dairies

JUNE 21, 2019

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