np < t m9

tsu-na-ne-tlv-ta-nv-sv

Generations,
Cherokee Language Through Art

This book is made possible by contributions from

The Annenberg Foundation

Cherokee Heritage Center
Tahlequah, OK
2009
**Introduction**

The Cherokee National Historical Society, Inc is pleased to present our most exciting project to date, “Generations, Cherokee Language Through Art.” This exhibit explored the artistic expression of the Cherokee people and their connection with their language. The exhibit opened May 22, 2009 and lasted through August 16, 2009 showcasing the best examples of Cherokee artwork in the country.

The exhibit consists of 85 original pieces of artwork showcased in this publication. Each piece is approximately 7” x 7” and focused on one of the Cherokee syllabary characters. Each artist was assigned one character to create their work in any medium they decide. The artists chosen include Cherokee Nation Immersion Children, National Treasure artists and Cherokee families who worked together from their homelands from North Carolina to Oklahoma.

One aspect of this exhibit that I enjoyed was reading the artists feelings about the Cherokee language and the personal stories that we are sharing with you. Everyone who participated in the exhibit donated their talents to this unique project that shares the Cherokee language in a way never done before. We are very grateful for their participation and passion for their culture.

We feel the Cherokee language and arts will continue, and thrive through the creation of this exhibit. We have found the key experience of visiting a museum and learning about a culture is the opportunity to view special projects, like this one, brought and will continue to bring Cherokee families together for generations to come. Those moments stay with people and they in turn become the messengers of culture.

I would like to give a huge ‘wado,’ thank you to Teri Rhoades who volunteered hours of her time to make this project happen. She worked with local schools and children to make sure their voices were heard. I could not have done this without her.

This entire project was made possible by the Annenberg Foundation, for which we are very grateful. You can find out more about their foundation at www.annenbergfoundation.org

I. Mickel Yantz, Curator
Sequoyah
By Tom Mooney

THE MAN
Sequoyah’s life is one of mystery. Many scholars disagree on the time and place of his birth. Most likely, he was born shortly before the American Revolution c. 1770 in eastern Tennessee. In that land he was a farmer, and developed skills in silversmithing.

He was known to have a lame walk. Some speculate that it was caused by a birth defect; others say it resulted from a medical condition acquired later in life, while others insist that it was the result of a war wound from action in the War of 1812.

Sequoyah’s mother’s name was Wurteh, but his father’s name is less certain. Possibly it was an itinerant German named George Gist, or Col. Nathaniel Gist, a friend of George Washington. Most Cherokees acknowledge the presence of European ancestry, but some suggest that it was more distant in his ancestry.

Many scholars have attempted to translate the meaning of the name Sequoyah. Some of the more common translations are “He guessed it”, “Pig-in-pen”, “pig’s foot”, “the lame one”, “guess it”, “lame boy”. These translations are sharply disputed by Jack Kilpatrick, Cherokee scholar, who concludes that the name has no meaning at all.

Sequoyah’s appearance is also open to speculation. It is believed that the only portrait of Sequoyah was made in 1828 when he traveled to Washington. During his stay at Washington, he agreed to pose for Charles Bird King. Unfortunately, the King portrait was destroyed in the Smithsonian Institution fire that occurred January 24, 1865. The only record we have is from art students who copied the King portrait.
John Howard Payne in 1836 said about Sequoyah: “He was altogether what we picture an old Greek philosopher.” Payne also found him to be of “animated eyes and pleasant disposition”.

A native of the area described Sequoyah as “having a sallow complexion and that a person would take him for a full-blood”.

SEQUOYAH:
THE INSPIRATION
The Cherokee Language is the only known instance of one person reducing the verbal language to a written form. This is made even more remarkable by the fact that Sequoyah was illiterate. Some accounts attribute his experience in the U. S. Army as the inspiration. He observed that soldiers would receive letters and that these “talking leaves” somehow provided a means of communication.

Sequoyah’s initial effort, in 1809, was to create a written symbol for each word in the Cherokee language. He soon realized that a symbol for each word would be nearly impossible, so instead he revised his work creating a symbol to represent each syllable of the language. Instead of using a pencil and paper, he often carved the symbols into bark.

The result in 1821 was an 87 character (later reduced to 85) “alphabet”. Most of the characters were of his creation, such as 2 which means “o-si-yo” or “hello.” Sequoyah also had access to Greek and English texts and borrowed some of those symbols. For instance, the Cherokee word for “corn” is “SM” or “selu.”

The invention of the syllabary did not lead to immediate success for Sequoyah. It was first viewed as some form of black magic and some tribal members sought to have him put to death for sorcery. His cousin, Assistant Chief George Lowry, intervened and arranged a test before the council. Sequoyah had taught the language to his daughter A-yo-ka. She was placed outside the room as members of the council gave messages to Sequoyah. He wrote their words on notes that were carried to A-yo-ka. When A-yo-ka returned to the council and spoke the words, the council became convinced of the value of Sequoyah’s work.

The ease with which native speakers could acquire the language allowed the Cherokee people to become nearly 95% literate almost overnight. It remains the most dramatic literary improvement in any society to date.
SEQUOYAH:  
THE FRONTIERSMAN

Sequoyah was forever living on the fringe of Cherokee Society. In 1817 he was among the group known as “Old Settlers” that removed to northwestern Arkansas.

In 1828, the Old Settlers exchanged their Arkansas land for approximately 14,000,000 acres in northeastern Oklahoma. Article 5 of that treaty provides, “...five hundred dollars for the use of George Guess, another Cherokee, for the great benefits he has conferred upon the Cherokee people, in the beneficial results which they are now experiencing from the use of the Alphabet discovered by him, to whom also, in consideration of his relinquishing a valuable saline, the privilege is hereby given to locate and occupy another saline on Lee’s Creek.”

Sequoyah later built a one-room log cabin near the banks of the Big Skin Bayou Creek located near what is now the city of Sallisaw in northeastern Oklahoma. The county in which this cabin is located was named in Sequoyah’s honor. The cabin is now enclosed and maintained by the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Clearly, Sequoyah maintained a deep interest in the welfare of the Cherokees, as evidenced by his serving as President of the Council when the eastern and western factions of the Cherokee Nation sought to reunite in 1839. Sequoyah was perhaps the only individual respected by both factions and thus played a pivotal role in tribal politics. Sequoyah again turned his attention to the west and headed to Mexico in about 1843 to search for a band of Cherokees.

It was during this trip that he died. Ironically, the National Council in 1843, unaware of Sequoyah’s death, voted him a lifetime pension of $300 per year.

Sequoyah’s burial place is unknown. Various groups have sought to discover the gravesite and have claimed success, but no conclusive evidence has ever been presented.
SEQUOYAH:
EPILOGUE

Sequoyah’s legacy is all around us. In 1828, the Cherokee Phoenix became the first newspaper to be published in a native language. The first edition of that paper carried a Cherokee translation of the 1827 Cherokee Constitution on the front page. The tradition continued in the west with the publication of the Cherokee Advocate, which was free to those who read only Cherokee. Cherokee law books were also published in Sequoyah’s syllabary.

Missionaries were also quick to translate the Holy Bible into the Cherokee syllabary. At nearby Park Hill Mission, Rev. Samuel Worcester worked alongside Elias Boudinot, the former editor of the Cherokee Phoenix, translating and printing selected books of the Holy Bible into available text.

Dwight Mission produced hymnals and other portions of the Holy Bible. Arguably, this work hastened the spread of Christianity and weakened the traditional clan system.

The Cherokee language continues to be used today. Despite efforts by the United States government to prevent its in boarding schools, it has survived. The Oklahoma Driver’s Manual has been translated into Cherokee, along with street signs, business signs, and a host of others. Today, a Cherokee language course is offered by Northeastern State University, located in Tahlequah, Oklahoma and at the university of Oklahoma in Norman, Okalhoma.

Hundreds of schools are named in honor of Sequoyah, as are the giant Sequoia trees in California. The Sequoyah Book Award is one of the most prestigious awards an author can receive for children’s literature. The State of Oklahoma selected Sequoyah as one of its two honorees in Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol Building.

After nearly two centuries, Sequoyah’s work continues to play an important role in the Cherokee way of life.

After the invention of the syllabary, Sequoyah spent much time attempting to create a system of numbers on the decimal system. He presented that system to the tribal council. They rejected Sequoyah’s concept and chose to use the Arabic numerals, which were simpler, and already in widespread use. This invention, though it came to nothing, is as astonishing as the syllabary.
Cherokee Syllabary
The Characters

Da  Re  Ti  O with  i
Sa  ge  Ygi  A  J
Va  he  Ahi  Fho  G
Ha  me  Hmi  Gm  M
Ta  An  V  Zno  A
Ma  Aque  Pqui  Vqu  Q
na  ne  hni  Znu  Qu
Qua  Aque  Pqui  VQuo  Quu
Usa  4se  Bsi  I  F
Ta  Sde  Tte  J  V
da  Ltle  Cidl  Jti  Vdo
L  O  Ktso  J
TLA  Gtse  Irtsi  Jtsu  Gtsv
Gwa  Gwe  OwI  Ow  Jwu
Ya  Bye  Ayi  H  Gyu

“It’s like an ongoing thing. It started and it continues now and forever.”

Anna Sixkiller
Manager
Cherokee Nation Translation Department
The language was very strong within the Cherokee families until about the last 100 years, when my grandparents were young and they went to the public school and were punished for speaking the language.” Kathy was proclaimed a National Treasure for her basketry in 2004.
“My mother was full blood Cherokee and told me that when she started 1st grade she had to learn English and kids made fun of her. It was a very difficult time in her young life. She told me that was never anything she would put her child through. We are the 1st generation not to speak Cherokee.”
phonetic: i    pronunciation: ee
i g    i-ga    day

Shelia McCall Filer
Cherokee Nation
Shelia has competed in art shows with her paintings in Oklahoma where she currently resides.
O

phonetic: o  pronunciation: oh
o g n  o-ga-na  groundhog

Sam Jones, 20
Cherokee Nation

Why is it important to teach the Cherokee language?
“It’s a way of connecting with the past, a tradition older than any craft that defines who we are.”
U

phonetic: u      pronunciation: ooh
u s d    u-s-di   baby or small

Belinda Meigs Rodgers, 46 and Evan Rodgers, 19
Cherokee Nation

For Belinda “I was fortunate enough to grow up with grandparents speaking, singing and writing Cherokee and other languages.” For Evan “One of the most rewarding experiences I’ve had as an artist is being invited to donate several artworks to art auctions benefiting autism.”
Edwin Rackleff, 48
United Keetowah Band of Cherokee
Mr. Rackleff has been a prolific artist showing, competing and winning art competitions for decades throughout Oklahoma.
phonetic: ga    pronunciation: gah
 g A n l    ga-sa-na-l(i)    roof

Roxanne Harmen
Cherokee Nation
Roxanne is currently a student at Sequoyah High School in Tahlequah, Oklahoma
phonetic: ka    pronunciation: kah
K k i    ka-lv-(i)    month

Tonya Giger
Cherokee Nation, Prairie Potawatomi
“By keeping the Cherokee language thriving we will thrive as a people.
The Cherokee language is interwined in all things Cherokee.”
b

phonetic: ge    pronounciation: gay, kay
bl a    ge-li-(a)    i think

Jacque Hanna
Cherokee Nation

“I am an educator in profession and in heart. I love passing down and sharing knowledge about my heritage and my art. My art makes me feel connected to my past, present, and my future.”
Kathryn Roastingear, 46
Cherokee Nation

"The meaning of the Cherokee language and Cherokee culture is that you should be very grateful and appreciate the person or persons that were, and maybe still are, your teachers. What I know about the language and culture I learned from people."
q

phonetic: go  pronunciation: go, ko
qw  go-la  winter

Barbara Girty

_Illinois District Representative, United Keetowah Band of Cherokee 2007-2010_

“ My ancestry is from some of the most traditional Keetoowah, Cherokee, Creek and Natchez ceremonial leaders to arrive in Indian Territory. They are all gone now and very few in my family are fluent. It is my lifelong goal to learn and be able to pass the language on to my descendents.”
phonetic: gu   pronunciation: goo, koo

J J   gu-g(u)   tick

Lori A. Reed, 47
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

“I consider myself lucky to have been raised by parents who both speak the language and were raised with many of the Cherokee traditions and beliefs. The evenings that we sat and listenend to my parents tell stories were very special times and were invaluable in teaching me to respect the Cherokee culture and myself.”
Z
phonetic: gv  pronounciation: guh, kuh
z l  gy-l(i)  racoon

Jessica Nicole Neighbors
Cherokee Nation
Why is it important to teach the Cherokee language?
“So we can keep our language alive so it won’t die down.”

23
phonetic: ha   pronunciation: hah
UWy   ha-wi-ya   meat

Lori Smiley, 47
Cherokee Nation
“It represents the Cherokee people’s ingenuity and has helped us survive by enabling us to communicate everything from the atrocities of forced removal to the current events that effect our tribe today.”
“Language is important because it is a tie we have to each other and our history. A story can lose its meaning when translated. The Cherokee language is beautiful.”
h

phonetic: hi         pronunciation: he
hsf    hi-s-g(i)    five

Neosha Pendergraft, 13
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Is it important to teach the Cherokee language?
“I think more people should know our language and not let it die”
phonetic: ho
pronunciation: hoe
$\text{gs} \quad \text{ho-li-ga-s} \quad \text{do you understand?}

Ke’yah E-sil Michael Lewis, 11
Cherokee Nation
“The Cherokee Syllabary is totally awesome!“
phonetic: hu  pronunciation: who
!
!! hu-hu  nightingale

Justin Grayson, 24
Cherokee Nation
“The Cherokee language is a thread among many others that connects us to each other, so it is important for us to keep it alive.”
Why is it important to teach the Cherokee language?

“To keep a traditional lifestyle alive and to share the Cherokee heritage.”
Wayne Wright, 51

Cherokee Nation

“I feel that the language is part of the glue that helps hold the culture together. While the Cherokee history, culture, and language are blossoming into the 21st century, let’s not forget the past as we look toward the future with a renewed sense of our forefathers role in history and education.”
Why is it important to teach the Cherokee language?

“So it does not become lost to our children.”
phonetic: li      pronunciation: lee
{ l su-l(i) buzzard

Lisa Rutherford
Cherokee Nation

“If we lose our language, we lose our identity.”
The preservation of the Cherokee language is vital to the identity of the culture and even more vital to the Cherokee citizen. The practice of preserving language adds to the resiliency for which Native people have been known to exhibit for many, many years.
phonetic: lu  pronunciation: loo
[ UMI ]  de-ha-lu-yi  June, a month

Collin Vann
Cherokee Nation

Collin is currently a student at Sequoyah High School in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.
Mary Horsechief-Henderson, 47

Cherokee Nation, Pawnee

“I am not a speaker. My mother told me she remembers her grandmother speaking Cherokee some, but except for a few words and meanings it was not passed down. To me it is something intangible, elusive and ethereal. So it really brings me much joy to see and hear the immersion kids singing and talking in Cherokee. I just cry every time.”
phonetic: ma    pronunciation: mah
%g    ma-ga    Mark, a name

Christina and Martha Berry
Cherokee Nation

“It is important to the understanding of our ancestor’s thinking and philosophy. Therefore, it is important to our understanding of ourselves and our future.”
Christina is a photographer and her mother, Martha, is a bead artist.
Jaydun Teehee, 4
Cherokee Nation, Creek
Jaydun is currently enrolled in the Head Start program at the Early Childhood Unit of the Cherokee Nation.
phonetic: mi  pronunciation: me
GN  tsi-mi  Jimmy, a name

Pam Harris, 48
Cherokee Nation
Raised in Bushyhead, Pam is a self taught artist. “I am a descendant of Benjamin Tincup, first Cherokee inducted in the Baseball Hall of Fame.”
phonetic: mo       pronouniciation: moh
     _R    mo-si    Moses, a name

Brandy Adair, 34
Cherokee Nation

"Without teaching it, the language will die. So much of our culture and history has to do with the Cherokee language we can’t afford to lose it."
The language is what makes a Cherokee a Cherokee. It is who we are. And if we lose our language, we lose our identity. The Cherokee language is very important to me. I am trying to learn as much as I possibly can.
Polly Whitekiller, 91
Cherokee Nation
Polly is a self taught seamstress and was born in Delaware County, Oklahoma only a decade after Oklahoma statehood in 1907.
phonic: \textbf{hna} \quad \textit{pronunciation: hnah}

c\texttildelow \quad \textbf{da-hna-w(a)} \quad \textit{war}

Lisan Tiger, 13
\textit{Cherokee, Creek, Seminole}

Do you have a family story about the Cherokee language?
“I heard the stories from my parents and camp storytellers then I made art with it.”
phonetic: ne  pronunciation: nay
p w j  ne-la-du  eighteen

Destiny Moreno
Cherokee Nation
Destiny is currently enrolled in the Head Start program at the Early Childhood Unit of the Cherokee Nation.
Ethan Winn
Cherokee Nation

Ethan is the eleventh generation direct descendant of Sequoyah on his father’s side. Ethan, Yona, loves to play with his transformers and play sports.
phonetic: no   pronunciation: no
Zc    no-da    blackjack tree

Macy Ridge
Cherokee Nation
“I like to paint and put on puppet shows in Cherokee. I like talking to Uncle Mack in Cherokee... he teaches me things like old words and old ways.”
phonetic: nu    pronunciation: new
K0 n    ka-nu-n(a)    bullfrog

Christie Tiger, 15
Cherokee, Creek, Seminole
“When I was practicing (Cherokee) for the Cherokee Challenge Bowl, my Mom would keep making me review the words everytime I got in the car. She made all my friends who came over learn them as well.”
m

phonetic: nv  pronounciation: nuh

mf  nv-g(i)  four

Georgia Dick
Cherokee Nation

“My grandsons are in the Immersion program and when I hear them talk one of them makes gestures and sounds just like my Dad. My Dad would be so proud.”
Q

phonetic: **qua** pronounciation: **gwah, kwah**

Gs Q tsi-s-qua bird

Wahlesah Dick
Cherokee Nation

“The language connects my daughter and nephews to their great grandfathers and great grandmothers who no longer walk with us. The children walk their great grandfathers land and see what he saw and walk down the road to his best friend…and the best friend speaks to them in Cherokee.”
@ phonetic: que   pronunciation: gway, kway
J @   gu-que  guinea

Hunter Miller, 3
Cherokee Nation
Hunter is currently enrolled in the Head Start program at the
Early Childhood Unit of the Cherokee Nation.
phonetic: qui  pronounciation: gwee, kwee

so-qui-l(i)  horse

Cydney Dodd, 14
Cherokee Nation

Why is it important to teach the Cherokee language?
“Because in the future the language will not be around so we should teach everyone we can.”

50
Veronica Gaston, 43
Cherokee Nation

“The syllabary is an important cultural tool for educating, communicating, and documenting our views in our own natural expression which is distinct from other cultural groups.”
Denise Chaudoin, 59
Cherokee Nation

“The language identifies us as unique and separate from the cultures around us. I believe if the language dies, we will die as a people so it’s important to teach the language and share it with others. If we do so, future generations will continue to be Cherokee.”
The Cherokee language is meant to be spoken slowly and deliberately. Nowadays I find it very disheartening to hear younger people speaking Cherokee very quickly.
No other invention has had a greater impact on our Cherokee people than the syllabary.

Lori Smiley, 47
Creeoke Nation

“No other invention has had a greater impact on our Cheorkee people than the syllabary.”
Robert Lewis, 44
Cherokee Nation

“Art and language must evolve to flourish, the Cherokee syllabary combines both...Creating the embodiment of a unique culture by utilizing and combining the language of its people with the beauty of art”
phonetic: se    pronunciation: say
SM    se-lu    corn

Talen Gann
Cherokee Nation
Talen is currently enrolled in the Head Start program at the Early Childhood Unit of the Cherokee Nation.
R
phonetic: si    pronunciation: see
R Q   si-qua    hog

Dianna Kimble Guffey, 47
Cherokee Nation
“For quite sometime we have been losing the language and the culture, but with the Immersion program and the hard work of everybody we can bring it back. I am a fluent Cherokee speaker and so very proud of that.”
D

phonetic: so    pronunciation: sow
\ DC    wa-so-tl(i)   moth

Sinihele Rhoades t  O d, 7
Cherokee Nation
“I am proud to have served as Little Miss Cherokee and love my Cherokee language. I go to Immersion School and I can read and write in syllabary. It makes me laugh when I have to read syllabary to adults.”
Virginia Carey

Cherokee Nation

“The Cherokee language is a beautiful language, but today most people are not using correct sounds for example: diphthongs, guttural stops, and nasal sounds, to enhance the sound of each syllable. My heart melts when I walk into a room and everybody is speaking a language my parents would recognize as Cherokee.”
9

phonetic: sv       pronounciation: suh

9 f       sv-g(i)       onion

Hondo Svnoyi Kirk, 7
Cherokee Nation

Wyman: “Gadoke dejalvkwdi?”
Debb Pritchett
Cherokee Nation

“This is a picture of my family and our friends’ young daughter. I am at the top. My 19 year daughter, Karriddean Anquoe is the main stem and my 13 year old, Philline Anquoe is the curve, 2 year old Kendra Martinez completes the character.” Photo by Tiffany Holcomb
Rebecca Alice Wiltshire Whitwell
_Cherokee Nation_

“My grandmother had 13 grandchildren and when each one was born she started them a quilt. The only way they got the quilt was to graduate from high school. All graduated and got their quilt.”
Delores Wadsworth, 74
Cherokee Nation
“It is important to teach the Cherokee language, so it will never be lost.”
phonetic: te  pronounciation: tay

d8s d  di-te-s-di  iron

K.A. Gilliland 39, Andrew J. Sikora 47, Skyla Sikora 4, and Sean Sikora 9

Cherokee Nation

“The language is the foundation of Cherokee identity. It is the core that connects the past present and future generations. Upon this foundation the rest of the culture emanates, and grows.”
"I want my children to know that there is a language that their grandfather spoke. I want them to know that the same curiosities, frustrations and joys that they feel today were the same for their Grandfather as a boy, just said in Cherokee."

Tonia, Wrighter and Parker Weavel

Cherokee Nation

phonetic: di  pronunciation: dee

dw  di-la  skunk

65
Beverly Cowan
Cherokee Nation

Beverly was born in Arkansas and was raised in Taiwah, Oklahoma. She is a 6th generation Cherokee Nation citizen descended from Old Settlers. She is a new grandma and taught Special Education and Learning Disabilities for more than 35 years in both Oklahoma and Texas."
phonetic: do       pronunciation: doe, toe
4 A       do-s(a)   mosquito

Karen Coody Cooper, 63
Cherokee Nation
Born in Tulsa, Karen grew up in Collinsville. Her college work has been at the Oklahoma College for Woman, Western Connecticut State University and the University of Oklahoma. She has had a prolific career in the museum world including 14 years at the Smithsonian Institute.
Phonetic: **du**  Pronunciation: **do, two**

Josephine Gibson, 72
*Cherokee Nation*

“I miss all my family that have passed on. It was so common to find friends and neighbors you knew could speak. We knew each other by our Cherokee names.”
Teri Rhoades
Cherokee Nation

“Language can define who a person is culturally. I grew up hearing words that were not English and was never instructed past that. Today I work hard to understand the Cherokee language. The irony is that my son and I are learning from my daughter who is the youngest member of our family.”
A language is a whole ecosystem of thought. It represents a unique way of perceiving the world and solving problems. The loss of Native languages could result in the loss of concepts or values that have great potential for the cultures and societies of the whole world.
phonetic: tla     pronunciation: tlah, hlah

Oj     tla-wo-tu   mud

Jimmy Wilson, 50
Cherokee Nation

“I remember as a child sitting on my Uncle Bee’s lap while he taught me how to count to ten in Cherokee. Outside the window I could see his old shed with coon hides tacked all over it. He has long since passed away, but whenever I want to see him, I watch Where the Red Fern Grows. He is in it during the coon hunt contest.”
Justin Grayson, 24
Cherokee Nation
“I am proud of my heritage and the beliefs of my culture. I am Cherokee.”
C
phonetic: tli  pronunciation: tlee, hlee
a f Cl  a-gi-tli-yi  suffer

Judy Pierce
Cherokee Nation
“It is important to preserve and educate Cherokee Language to all ages.”
phonetic: tlo  pronunciation: tloë, dloë, hloë

Claudia Barbee, 58
Cherokee Nation

“Tradition - I find it very sad when culture (language, arts, crafts) are not passed on to future generations, and should be taught to anyone interested in learning them.”
&

phonetic: tlu  pronunciation: tlue, hlue
& &  tlu-tlu  martin

Thomas McCoy, 8 and Keith McCoy, 41
Cherokee Nation
“The language needs to be preserved so future generations can have it to enjoy and pass along.”

75
phonetic: tlv  pronunciation: tluh, hluh
u n s [ <  u-na-s-de-tlv  root

Dena Coleman, 39
Cherokee Nation
“I love the Cherokee language and culture of the Cherokee people. I think that we are lucky to have such a beautiful heritage. Keeping the Cherokee language alive is important and necessary to keeping the culture alive.”
E

phonetic: tsa  pronunciation: tsah, jah, chah
a E d  a-tsa-d(i)  fish

Dorothy Sullivan
Cherokee Nation

“My dad was born in a double-log cabin over on my grandma’s Cherokee allotment over near Stilwell in Goingsnake District. When we were growing up he always taught us about being proud of being Cherokee. It was always something we just took for granted. It was just a part of us.”
It is a great honor for me and for my family to represent my tribe to many people through my art. I believe that art is a great teacher and can visually describe and reveal a culture; art speaks to all people.
Rhiannon Jackson, 26
Cherokee Nation

“This project is important and exciting to me because it will be teaching students the Cherokee syllabary. The Cherokee Language is very unique and part of history as well as Culture. The letter I had for this project was “tsi” which is in the word “tsi-s-du” which means rabbit, one of my favorite animals”
phonetic: tso  pronunciation: tsoe, joe, choe
5 w  tso-l(a)  tobacco

Jimmy Joel Keen, 68
Cherokee Nation
“It’s a wonderful culture and a beautiful language. A rich history that needs to be shared with others. Especially our youth.”
phonetic: tsu   pronunciation: tsew, jew, chew
#s g   tsu-s-g(a) oak

Cara Cowan
Cherokee Nation Tribal Council, District 7 – Will Rogers (Rogers County, Oklahoma) since 2003
“The language is the fundamental foundation of our culture and identity. It should be the priority of each one of us to learn as much of our Tribal language as possible throughout our lifetime.”
phonetic: tsv  pronounciation: tsuh, juh, chuh
a ; y  a-tsv-ya   rooster

Christie Duschel
Cherokee Nation

“Language is important because it is a tie we have to each other and our history. A story can lose its meaning when translated. Tha Cherokee language is beautiful.”
phonetic: wa  pronunciation: wah, hwah
\ y  wa-y(a) wolf

Onendanegea Rhoades, 10
Cherokee Nation
“I think Cherokee is cool like a secret spy language. I go to the Museum of Natural History a lot and noticed that they label some of the exhibits in Cherokee and English but they do not do that for the dinosaur exhibits. I want to be the palentologist who labels the exhibits in Cherokee.”
Andrew Rhoades, 41
Cherokee Nation

“Language is a ‘living’ thing that must evolve as do the users of language. I write this in English only wishing that I had the knowledge and ability to write it in Cherokee. Like anything that is set aside and left unused, it will fall into disrepair. “
phonetic: wi       pronounciation: wee, hwee
UWy       ha-wi-ya       meat

Harry Oosahwee
Cherokee Nation

“The language is our connection to our Cherokee world, and that view is the genesis of the Cherokee people, 'The Kituhwa People' if you will. The language was given to us by our Creator, it is a thought pattern. Our language defines wisdom, medicine, history and knowledge for a group of people, 'Us.'
O

phonetic: wo  pronunciation: who, hwoh
O y  wo-y(a)  pigeon

Brynna Kindle, 14
Cherokee Nation
Why is it important to teach the Cherokee language?
“My grandpa is full blood Cheorkee so it means a great deal to me. Also, a lot of my ancestors are full blood.”
phonetic: **wu**  
pronunciation: **woo, hwoo**  
X[ l z  
wu-de-li-gy  
west

Raven Miller, 14
Cherokee Nation

“I think the Cherokee language is interesting. It’s fun to say Cherokee words too. Cherokee culture means a lot to me since I’m Cherokee.”
Robbie Jordan, 69
Cherokee Nation

“Your background is where you came from. If you can’t be proud of it, how can you go forward?”
y

phonetic: ya  pronunciation: yah, hyah
my    nv-ya  rock

Shan Goshorn
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
“...I believe learning one’s native language is the only way to truly understand your culture. Thinking in a traditional language shifts your perception in the way you perceive the world.”

89
phonetic: ye    pronunciation: yay, hyay
a BC    a-ye-tl(i)    middle or half

April Mathews, 20
Cherokee Nation
“I learned what I know about Cherokee in school, in Culture Class. I have listened to my grandmother talk about growing up and how they did not speak Cherokee in her home because, then I guess it wasn’t cool to be Cherokee.”
I

phonetic: yi  pronunciation: yee, hyee
a %l  a-ma-y(i)  creek

Yazzie Lee Samuel Lewis, 15
Cherokee Nation
Why is it important to teach the Cherokee language?
“Because we are running out of people who know it.”
Y

phonetic: yo  pronunciation: yoh, hyoh
Y n  yo-n(a)  bear

Jasmine Jordan, 14
Cherokee Nation
Why is it important to teach the Cherokee language?
“I find it very fun to learn about. I love to learn about the Cherokee culture, so I will know my background.”
Why is it important to teach the Cherokee language?

“To show how Cherokees used to communicate.”
Verna Bates, 57
Cherokee Nation

“Today, we are free to speak any language we choose. It is past time to teach the language and the learning tools should be made available to all, no matter where they reside. The Cherokee language must be preserved and taught in order to preserve our history and future.”
DAVID G. FITZGERALD
Photographer

David G. Fitzgerald began his career as an artist and illustrator, and progressed into professional photography. As founder of David G. Fitzgerald & Associates Inc., a commercial photography studio in Oklahoma City, OK, David has created countless images seen in the advertisements of national and international clients. After more than 35 years as a commercial photographer, his work today focuses primarily on photography book projects.

Early on, Fitzgerald’s work began to receive national attention. In 1979, Oklahoma was published, the first of many coffee-table books featuring his photographs. Books that followed include: Ozarks; Israel, Land of Promise; Mansion Fare; Oklahoma II; Portrait of the Ozarks; Oklahoma Crossroads; Bison, Monarch of the Plains; Cherokee; Chickasaw, Unconquered and Unconquerable; Oklahoma 3; and Cherokee Trail of Tears. Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company in Portland, Oregon, published all of these books.

Completed in October 2007 was the photography for a book about Cherokee art and cultures, titled Building One Fire, to be published in 2010 by the Cherokee Nation.

Beginning in 1995, Fitzgerald periodically traveled the world, documenting famine relief efforts of an international humanitarian organization. In December 2001 he accompanied them to Afghanistan, in 2004 to Uganda, Africa, and in 2005 to Banda Ache, Indonesia, to document the Tsunami.

Upcoming projects include a new book for the Chickasaw Nation, titled Chickasaw Renaissance. Photography is done; book available fall 2009.

Honors
In April 2005, inducted into the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.

Recruited by the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum to judge the annual Western Heritage Awards in the Literary Category of Photography Books.

Fitzgerald was featured as Celebrated Artist at the May Fair Arts Festival, May 4th, 2002, in Norman, OK, organized by the Assistance League of Norman, OK.

1996 Outstanding Tourism Award, presented jointly by the Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Department and the Oklahoma Travel Industry Association.

Served on the Board of the Oklahoma Film Commission.

Lifetime Member, International Photography Hall of Fame.