



# Promising Practices in Peacemaking and Peace Circles: Lessons from Chickasaw Nation Peacekeepers

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# Disclaimer

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Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Tewanna Edwards great uncle, served in World War I as a Choctaw Code Talker. Her father Edwin Eugene Anderson also served in the military in World War II. Ms. Edwards Mother, Jeanette Robinson-Anderson, graduated from college with a Bachelors Degree when she was 65 years, receiving a Master's in Christian Counseling and certified as a Family and Divorce mediator.

Edwards since 2014 has served as a liaison for Out Reach-Oklahoma Health Care Authority in Oklahoma City. In the past she worked as Bookkeeper / Secretary for Caddo County Independent Living Center, as well as an Executive Secretary for the Kiowa Housing Authority, Certification Representative for Wichita Tribal Complex, Loan Department Secretary for 1st Federal Saving and Loan, Interview / Unemployment Claims with Oklahoma State Employment Secretary Commission and Office Manager / Assistant Project Manager for SIPI in Corrales, New Mexico.

Edwards is a frequent speaker for Chickasaw Nation Judicial Department. She lives in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and continues to remain active in many Native American Organizations.

## EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

**M.S.**, (Master of Arts) Christian Counseling – American Christian College Moore, Ok , 1998

**B.A.**, (Business Administration, University of Science & Arts, Chickasha, Ok 1976  
**Business Machine Specialist**, Draughon School of Business, Oklahoma City, 1972

**Family & Divorce Medication Institution**, (based on Oklahoma District Court Medication Act) The Medication Institute, Oklahoma City, 2004



TEWANNA EDWARDS  
Chickasaw Nation Peacemaker



WAYNE EDGAR  
Chickasaw Nation Peacemaker

“I consider it a great honor to be ask to serve as a Peacemaker and to be of service to the Court and the Chickasaw people.”

Wayne is a Chickasaw Citizen and Elder, Chickasaw Language teacher, writer for the Journal of Chickasaw History and Culture, a Juried Artist where he creates traditional tools, turkey wing bone calls and regalia as his great grandmother taught him as a child. He sits as Chairman of the Chickasaw Historical Society and serves as Peacemaker for the Chickasaw Judiciary.

- Currently Chairman of the Board of the Chickasaw Historical Society.
- Completed advanced Peacemaking Training at the Little River Band of the Ottawa Indians Manistee, Michigan, August 2018
- Chosen by Thrive Traditions to do a documentary on Turkey Wing Bone Calls for training of Chickasaw People.
- Wayne is a Veteran serving during the Vietnam War.
- Bachelor of Arts in Education Degree from East Central University. Ada, Oklahoma.
- Taught courses for both East Central University Ada, Oklahoma and North Texas State University, Denton, Texas
- Taught in the Ada City Schools Ada, Oklahoma, teaching Science, History and Government Developed an Environmental Education Program for 5<sup>th</sup> graders which continued from 1972 until the present.
- Served as the Executive Director of the Goddard Youth Foundation in Ardmore, Oklahoma for 38 years.
- Created and operated the Goddard Children’s Museum in Sulphur, Oklahoma which houses “Fran” the Oklahoma State Dinosaur.
- Holds a black belt in Kung Fu Martial Arts since 1969. Taught Martial Arts for many years.
- Owns and operates Pinnacle Pest Control. Certified in General Pest Control. Licensed with extensive training through Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture.
- Served as Missionary to West Africa for the Baptist Missionary Association of Southeast Oklahoma for ten years.
- Currently serve as Director of Missions and Disaster Relief for the Baptist Missionary Association of Southeast Oklahoma.
- Currently serves on the National Disaster Response Committee of the Baptist Missionary Association of America serving 1600 churches.
- Chairman of the Special Advisory committee of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma.

Linda Sue Edgar (Susie), Heshi Iskunosi (Little Feather) is a Chickasaw Elder, Jewelry Maker and an Accountant. Heshi Iskunosi was born and raised in Ada, Oklahoma. Her Great Grandfather came from Mississippi on the Trail of Tears to Boggy Depot a stopping place for the Chickasaw to get supplies in Southeast Oklahoma then to Davis, Oklahoma in the 1830's. The family still owns their original allotment there. Her grandfather attended the first Indian School at the Chigley Mansion in Davis, Oklahoma owned by his uncle Nelson Chigley who was a Legislator and Governor of the Chickasaw Nation. The Chickasaw Nation is now renovating the first Indian school for a museum.

She serves as a Peacemaker for the Chickasaw Nation Judicial Department and has completed advanced Peacemaking training from the Little River Band of the Ottawa Indians in Manistee, Michigan.

She is a Juried Jewelry Artist and chosen by the nation to do a documentary of her jewelry "From the Earth". She has been a featured artist for three years at the Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference. Has held offices at the local, county, district levels of Oklahoma State University's Home and Community Education for 30 years. She also served as President of Oklahoma State University 4-H Leaders Association. Linda was an accountant for the Goddard Youth Foundation for twenty-eight years and currently holds that job after retirement in her family-owned business.



LINDA SUE EDGAR  
Chickasaw Nation Peacemaker



# Introduction

- Peacemaking Court
- The Chickasaw Nation Code on Peacemaking
- Who can become a Peacemaker
- Process on Peacemaking
- Peacemaking Circle

# Peacemaking Court

The Chickasaw Nation Peacemaking Court is a forum for resolving conflicts using Chickasaw traditions, customs and culture as the basis for finding peace in the resolution. The Peacemaking Court is a division of the Chickasaw Nation District Court.

Peacemaking is a process that requires the parties to agree to peacemaking and to the selection of the peacemakers in order to participate in the peacemaking process and resolve their differences.

The core values of the Peacemaking court are respect, humility, compassion, spirituality and honesty. No value carries more significance than any other. Participation in the Peacemaking Circle process indicates acceptance of these values both in word and action and a commitment to move forward from the point of dispute.

For those who are litigants in our court and request our Peacemaking, we will strive to be:

- Mediators of their differences;
- Leaders in teaching them our history, customs and culture;
- Healers of conflict by promoting peace and harmony;
- Guides to teach them and help them find their tribal identity.



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# Chickasaw Nation Code on Peacemaking

This Title 5, Chapter 14 shall be cited as the “Peacemaking Court Act of 2003”

## SECTION 5-1401.2

**A.** The purpose of the Peacemaking Court is to provide a forum for the use of traditional Chickasaw Nation methods of peacemaking to resolve disputes in a fair, informal, and inexpensive manner. Any ambiguity in this Code shall be liberally construed to carry out its purpose of encouraging traditional Chickasaw Nation methods of dispute resolution without formal court proceedings.

**B.** A Peacemaker shall have authority to use tribal cultural teachings and customs, including present day religious teachings, in the peacemaking process if the Peacemaker reasonably believes that such will further the objective of voluntarily resolving a dispute. Peacemakers shall have the authority to consult with tribal elders regarding tribal customs and tradition.



**SECTION 5-1401.4  
JURISDICTION OF THE PEACEMAKING COURT.**

The Peacemaking Court shall have jurisdiction over any matter referred to it by the District Court and upon the agreement of both parties who shall also agree to be bound by the decision of the Peacemaking Court as endorsed by the District Court. If a Peacemaker determines that the peacemaking process cannot produce an agreed resolution of the matter, the Peacemaker shall transfer the case back to the District Court which shall resume jurisdiction over the case. The Peacemaking Court shall not have jurisdiction over any matter before the District Court pursuant to the Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction described in Title 5, Chapter 4 of the Chickasaw Nation Code

**SECTION 5-1401.5  
USE OF TRIBAL TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMARY LAW.**

A Peacemaker shall have authority to use tribal cultural teachings and customs, including present day religious teachings, in the peacemaking process if the Peacemaker reasonably believes that such will further the objective of voluntarily resolving a dispute. Peacemakers shall have the authority to consult with tribal elders regarding tribal customs.

**SECTION 5-1401.6  
LIMITATIONS OF PEACEMAKER AUTHORITY.**

A Peacemaker shall not have the authority to force any parties to resolve a Court and Procedures Page 5-482 disputed matter, nor shall a Peacemaker have authority to adjudicate a matter which the parties cannot resolve through voluntary agreement.





# Who Can Become A Peacemaker

## SECTION 5-1401.3 : PEACEMAKERS SHALL MEET THE FOLLOWING QUALIFICATIONS:

- A.**
1. Has never been convicted of a felony;
  2. Is of good moral character and integrity;
  3. Is familiar with the provisions of this Act, Chickasaw Nation court procedures and federal law applicable to the Chickasaw Nation
  4. Is proficient in oral and written communications and is capable of preparing the papers and reports incidental to the office of Peacemaker
- B.** The District Court shall be responsible for assigning cases to a particular Peacemaker who shall in turn be responsible for assisting the involved parties in resolving their dispute through traditional methods of peacemaking. C. Peacemakers shall be selected by the Chickasaw Nation Supreme Court and must agree in writing and by oath to serve under the authority of the District Court. The Clerk of the District Court shall maintain a roster of persons approved as Peacemakers.
- C.** Peacemakers shall be selected by the Chickasaw Nation Supreme Court and must agree in writing and by oath to serve under the authority of the District Court. The Clerk of the District Court shall maintain a roster of persons approved as Peacemakers.



# Who Can Become A Peacemaker (cont.)

## **SECTION 5-1401.3 : PEACEMAKERS SHALL MEET THE FOLLOWING QUALIFICATIONS:**

**D.** A person may be removed from the Peacemaker roster for cause after the person has been afforded a hearing before a District Court Judge. A person removed Court and Procedures Page 5-481 from the roster for cause, after said hearing, may appeal his removal to the Supreme Court whose decision shall be final. A Peacemaker shall not be subject to the personnel policies including grievance procedures.

**E.** The parties to any dispute may agree to a certain individual listed on the roster described in Subsection C above as a Peacemaker for the resolution of their dispute. In such cases, the Peacemaker must be agreed to by all parties in the dispute.

**F.** Peacemakers are officers of the District Court and shall have the same immunities as do Judges of other Chickasaw Nation courts. (PR31-006, 7/15/14)

# Process on Peacemaking Court

1. Peacemaking Court can be by Agreement of both parties
2. The District Court can give an Order for parties to go to Peacemaking Court if both parties agree
3. The Clerks of the District Court will process the Order and give a copy to the Peacemaking Coordinator
4. The Coordinator will give the Peacemaking Forms to the parties to fill out and return to the Court
5. The Coordinator will process the paperwork and send a file of the forms to the selected Peacemaker(s), which is rotated.
6. Peacemakers will review the file and contact both parties to setup a date and time for Peacemaking
7. Coordinator will prepare a "Report of Peacemaking".
8. Once Peacemaking Court is done, all parties including the Peacemaker(s) will sign the "Report of Peacemaking"
9. The Report of Peacemaking is an Agreement between the parties and is not enforceable. If one need be enforceable the "Report of Peacemaking" will be placed in the Judges box for Review.





# Process on Peacemaking Court (cont.)

10. The Judge of the District Court will then set a Hearing Date for the parties to appear before them to go over the findings and prepare a proper Order that will be enforceable.
11. If at anytime either party needs more Peacemaking Court, the Peacemaker(s) will set a new date and time for the parties to appear.
12. All cases that come through the Peacemaking Court are confidential and only the parties or the peacemaker(s) may have a copy unless ordered by the Court.
13. Under special circumstance Court may Order that a (GAL) Guardian Ad Litem be present during Peacemaking Court. Also, under special circumstance a Peacemaker(s) may request that a Peace Officer be present if they feel one is needed.

# Peacemaking Circle

Each Pacemaker has their own individual way of how they will introduce the parties into their peacemaking circle and can only be best described by their own stories of why they became a Peacemaker and what they bring to the People of the Chickasaw Nation.

**Chickasaw Nation**  
**One Tribe One Mission**



# Conclusion

Peacemaking Court is a forum for resolving conflicts using Chickasaw traditions, customs and culture as the basis for finding peace in the resolution.

# Questions & Answers



**Thank you all for allowing us to be  
here with you today!**

**Be safe and be well!**



# Contact Us



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