She would be in charge of an agency that has sway over nearly 600 federally recognized tribes as well as public lands, waterways, wildlife, national parks and mineral wealth.

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden has nominated New Mexico Rep. Deb Haaland as Interior secretary, according to a person familiar with the decision.

“Today I am announcing my intention to pick as Interior secretary for the United States,” said Biden. “This is going to be a critical role for our country. I am excited to have her serve as my Interior secretary.”

The pick breaks a 245-year record of non-Native American leaders at the powerful federal agency that has sway over nearly 600 American Indian tribes.

“Her leadership experience in Congress and her background in public service will be key assets as we work to address the grave challenges facing our country,” Biden said.

“Dr. Haaland knows the value of working with tribes and she is committed to ensuring that Native American voices are heard. I am grateful for her service and look forward to working with her,” Biden said.

“Both of them have said that they want to do this and I believe that they will do it and I am absolutely confident that they will do it,” Biden added.

Haaland, a member of the Laguna Pueblo, has represented New Mexico’s 1st congressional district since 2019. She is a member of the Pueblo of Laguna and the Laguna Pueblo. She is the first Native American woman elected to Congress and the first Native American woman to serve as Interior secretary.

“I am honored and humbled to have the opportunity to serve as Interior secretary,” said Haaland in a statement posted to Facebook. “I am committed to working with tribal nations to ensure that our natural resources are protected and that our communities have the tools and resources they need to thrive.”

“I am thrilled to have Dr. Haaland join our team as Interior secretary,” Biden said.

“She is the perfect choice for this position and has a proven track record of working collaboratively with tribal nations,” Biden said.

“The Interior Department will play a critical role in responding to the climate crisis and ensuring that we protect our national parks and public lands,” said Biden.

“I have no doubt that Dr. Haaland will do an excellent job as Interior secretary and I am confident that she will work closely with tribal nations to ensure that their voices are heard,” Biden said.

“The Interior Department is critical to protecting our nation’s natural resources and ensuring that our communities have the tools and resources they need to thrive,” said Biden.

“I am confident that Dr. Haaland will work closely with tribal nations to ensure that their voices are heard and that they have the resources they need to thrive,” Biden said.

“I believe that Dr. Haaland will be an excellent Interior secretary and I am confident that she will work closely with tribal nations to ensure that their voices are heard,” Biden said.

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Hunting, fishing compact with Okla. extended again
The extension signed by Principal Chief Chad Hoskin Jr. and Gov. Kevin Stitt will expire on Dec. 31, 2021.

By Lindsey Barks
Reporter
TULSA - Cherokee Nation Natural Resources Secretary Chief Chad Hoskin Jr. provided updates on the tribe’s hunting and fishing compact with the state, the tribe’s testing and tracing system and the landloss closures in the Dec. 14 Resources Committee meeting.
Hoskin told tribal councilors that the tribe has executed an extension with Gov. Kevin Stitt’s office for an additional 10 years for the hunting and fishing compact.
“That’s going to authorize the compact to extend in the tribe from now to the previous extensions that we’ve had and along the same lines of its inception in 2013,” Harbaugh said. “Right now, we’re coordinating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, they’ve got the authority to transmit to data and get ready for our mail out of just the same documents that we have done in the D.O.J. in the mailout at the first of the year.
Until then, the tribe could acquire hunting and fishing licenses to CN citizens residing in Oklahoma. Licenses are also administered by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and provide CN citizens the same privileges of an Oklahoma hunting and fishing license, including a single universal deer tag and a single turkey tag per calendar year. The CN also agrees to buy up to 300,000 licenses for $2 a license.
“The agreement between the two tribes originally went into effect on Jan. 1, 2011, and expired on Dec. 31, 2020. An extension agreement for another term was signed later, followed by a year-long extension signed in January 2021. The extension was renewed again today by Principal Chief Chad Hoskin Jr. and Stitt to expire in December 2021.
Tribal Councilor Mike Shaumburg asked if the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in Huron v. Gove would give the CN leverage as far as what the tribe can do on its hunting and fishing compacts.
“I do think that it does give us some leverage because the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision gave us a legal basis, but something that we already knew and that was we can issue fishing compacts to our citizens just as Native American tribes with Cherokee Nation citizens within our boundaries,” Harbaugh said.
He added that the compact could provide more opportunities for CN citizens and that privileges for at-large citizens were included in the conversations.
“Not only those on the reservation on the hunting and fishing compact not only creates certainty for Cherokee people who are residents of the city or citizens outside of the 14 counties and within Oklahoma and that’s not something that’s going to be overturned by any opportunity to hunt and fish when they otherwise would not have that opportunity,” Harbaugh said.
Harbaugh also told councilors that Natural Resources will soon be releasing a “Cherokee Nation Hunting and Fishing Compacts” fix services that allow citizens to track when they’re on the sit items to run in Billville and Tahlequah, and that charging stations in both towns are in the works.

Oklahoma ranks No. 3 for test positivity rate, No. 7 for weekly new COVID-19 hospitalizations per inpatient bed, No. 21 for weekly new confirmed cases per capita and No. 13 in weekly new deaths per capita, according to the latest report published by the White House Coronavirus Task Force.

By Corey Jones
for weekly new confirmed cases per capita and No. 33 in weekly new deaths per capita, according to the latest report published by the White House Coronavirus Task Force.

The severe disease due to COVID-19,” Yandell said. “That’s why it’s so important to get the vaccine and to get it early.
“Since Chief Hoskin came in, we’ve quadrupled the number of master-apprentice programs,” said Yandell. “In 2019, we had about 100. We’re up to 400 in 2021.
There are an estimated 2,000 Cherokee language speakers in the tribe.

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A cornealux of state and local COVID-19 data were released for the first time for Dec. 16, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, along with the Centers for Disease Control.

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There now is light red, red, dark red and darkest red. Any county with elevated COVID-19 activity rate (19.5%) will be light red. Any county with high levels of virus transmission, with 71 (92%) in the dark red zone.

The compact between the tribe and the state originally went into effect on Jan. 1, 2011, and expired on Dec. 31, 2020. An extension agreement for another term was signed later, followed by a year-long extension signed in January 2021. The extension was renewed again today by Principal Chief Chad Hoskin Jr. and Stitt to expire in December 2021.

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Impact of mask mandates: COVID-19 case rate growth lower in cities that enacted early mask requirements

COBREY JONES  
Iceland

TULSA - Communities that imple- 
mented mask mandates before Octo-
ber have a much lower COVID-19 case 
rate compared to ones that waited or 
haven’t acted, according to state data.

The Tribal Council is expected to consider the spending 
increase on Jan. 13. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on McGirt v. Oklahoma in 
July stating that the Muscogee Creek Nation’s 
reservation is intact.

The growth was 346%, in municipalities 
that enacted mask ordinances before 
October. The growth was 398% in areas 
without mask orders.

Committee for Natural Resources. She 
written letters urging her appointment.

The Tribal Council seats open for this 
upcoming election cycle are Districts 
2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, and one At-Large

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enforcement officers.

Eight of the 10 cities in the study area 
amended mask ordinances before October.

Scores of tribal officials across the 
continent have read this statement, 
written letters urging her appointment.

She said she is still paying off student 
loans after college and law school for her-

The Cherokee Nation received 19 bison in December to add to its existing herd.

The CN gets 19 bison for herd

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“Health is here to stay regardless of our vacci-

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In the Cherokee Nation and across the world, we have struggled with the deadly impacts of the coronavirus. We have had sacrifices and suffered too many losses. Now vaccines are arriving in the CN offering freedom from the threat of this virulent virus.

Through advocacy, strategic prepation and strong collaboration with the Indian Health Service, we secured nearly 1,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine, the first approved for use in the United States. We have launched a three-phase plan for vaccine distribution.

In the first phase, the CN has already helped nearly or our frontline health care workers and emergency responders. These health care heroes saw the first priority for vaccination so we can connect them with the vaccine then work of protecting us and so many Cherokee.

Also in the first phase, we are vaccinating those who are 65 and older who make up approximately 20% of our population.

Once citizens register and make their preferences known, the Gadugi Portal will allow us to use the information in a way that enables us to improve our services and sharing of citizen data. Ultimately, the database allows our citizens to take control of their personal information.

The new portal also empowers every tribal citizen. Because it is centralized, the database allows CN citizens to take charge of their personal information, easily accessing information at any time. We have always had a few clicks.

We launched the Gadugi Portal, which is a unique database to improve services at the Cherokee Nation, to streamline personal information held in dozens of separate databases, to improve services at the Cherokee Nation, to streamline personal information held in dozens of separate databases.

CN prioritizes first COVID-19 vaccines

BY CHUCK HOSKIN JR. Chief Executive Officer

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Robert Sapp learned to make sassafras tea from her grandmother, who used it as a medicine.

BY LINDSEY BARK
Reporter

KENWOOD - Most Cherokees find a significant food to gather or hunt for each season throughout the year. One that is used for its medicinal properties is sassafras.

Cherokee Nation citizen Roberta Sapp learned from her grandfather how to identify the plant and prepare it in tea.

"My grandpa would go get it every fall and all during the winter, and that’s where I learned how to do it and that’s when I started drinking it," Sapp said.

Sassafras is recognized in the fall by its green and bright yellow leaves. "Sassafras is like a bush out in the woods. Right now you can locate it by looking at the leaves. A lot of the leaves are yellow and green. It’s pretty easy to find, especially in the fall," she said.

Sapp said she breaks off limbs and smells it to ensure that it is sassafras. "When I go out to pick it, I break the sticks off and I smell it. Usually you can smell it right good, that way you know it’s the right stick you’re drinking."

Cleaning: When enough is gathered, Sapp picks off the leaves and smaller limbs and begins breaking the larger limbs into 3- or 4-inch pieces. About a handful of sticks will suffice to make about three to four cups of tea.

Cooking: Put them in a pan and boil them. The water will turn yellow to make about three to four cups of tea. Sapp mostly finds sassafras that is used for its medicinal properties. It is best to drink the tea hot, and sugar or honey can be added for taste.

"You don’t have to put sugar in it, but you can sweeten it up a little bit if you want. My sister said she uses honey. I put a spoon of honey in it the other day and it’s good, but if I’d rather drink it just like it," Sapp said.

Gathering: Sapp mostly finds sassafras that is good for certain ailments or sickness and that’s why he always gathered and drank it in the fall and winter.

"Sassafras is good for your blood. It’s good for fevers and it’s good for colds," she said.

Sapp said her grandfather also added another traditional plant to sassafras tea called spice wood. Through her he always gathered and used it. "I remember my brother used to go pick another kind, not a root, but the sticks were called spice wood and my grandpa would mix them. When you’re younger you don’t pay attention to any of that, I wished I had asked more questions."

"It is best to drink the tea hot, and sugar or honey can be added for taste."

When sassafras tea is done, it will turn the water either a dark yellow or red color. "It is best to drink the tea hot, and sugar or honey can be added for taste."
WASHINGTON (AP) – The first home test for COVID-19 that doesn't require a prescription will soon be available in U.S. drugstores.

U.S. regulators on Dec. 15 authorized the rapid coronavirus test, which can be used anywhere and does not require a swallow sample or a visit to a test site, as quickly as possible to help the country head into the winter months. AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna say trial data suggest their vaccines are about 90% effective, meaning those who receive them are less likely to get infected. People who get vaccinated will still need to wear masks and practice social distancing as scientists work to understand how well the vaccines protect against variants that are circulating.
Millions of student loan borrowers who haven’t had to make a payment since the pandemic shut down the nation last winter just got an additional reprise. The payment pause, known as a forbearance, began March 13 as part of the original coronavirus relief package and was extended twice by the Trump administration, most recently through Jan. 31.

The payment has provided around 33 million borrowers with an interest-free reprieve from payments, preventing delinquency and subsequenct default while allowing them to retain their best means at the economy's battered.

Betsy Mayotte, the Institute of Student Loan Advisors president, said kicking the can even more has been beneficial. “Borrowers pursuing (Public Service Loan Forgiveness) an extra five months toward their total. For borrowers in default pursuing loan rehabilitation, it’s another free month. For borrowers getting anxious about being able to afford payments when the waiver is lifted, it’s more time to determine their strategy.”

Despite the fact that the economy hasn’t recovered from the ongoing pandemic (the U.S. unemployment rate in November remained nearly twice as high as in February), at 5.7%, according to the most recent data from the Bureau on Labor Statistics), borrowers can expect their bills to arrive again and autpay- ments will resume Jan. 31.

“I think that should be petrifying for everyone,” said Randall, the Student Borrower Protection Center executive director. “Certainly, there are a number of questions about how this is happening in Washington and if there are any other bailouts and fees being left in the president’s to-do list. And I think if we have watched this closely, the idea of tens of millions of borrowers’ accounts being turned on in a few weeks is particularly serious. And the idea of being equitable will be the forbearance extended will be critical for borrowers who have been growing anxious about being able to afford payments when the waiver is lifted. It’s more time to determine their strategy.”

Randall said. “To me it’s an indicator that if Con- gress didn’t stay before or after school, but ev- eryone is wanting. We’re wanting them to learn more about geometry. And students aren’t giving that they will re- gress having done anything this time the waiver back, likely won’t make something other to the end. I think this could have been improved. If they didn’t have that feeling there they wouldn’t have extended by just a month,” said Mayotte.

Biden could act as early as Jan. 20. In- auguration Day, but has not specifically said a forbearance extension is among his plans. Broad loan forgiveness is, but stu- dent loan policy experts say not to hang on that happening quickly, if at all. 

Legislatively, efforts by House Demo- crats to end the current forbearance Sept. 30, 2021, have stalled. Another relief bill could include longer extensions of the forbearance; no detailed viable plan has yet emerged. For now, expect payments to restart sometime after Jan. 31.

What can borrowers expect in 2021?

“The situation lends itself to confusion. I’m not sure how to get out of that,” said Scott Buchanan, executive director of Student Loan Servicing Alliance. “It’s very hard for us, but we’re doing our best, and we do have hope for the best when it comes to extensions. Borrowers making payments for the first time should sift through the information and make sure they get the right one. For those who are used to it,” Buchanan said. “If they think they’ll have a tough time, they might want to enroll in an income-driven repayment plan.”

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Borrowers who have earnings below a certain proportion becoming delinquent, at least initially.” The Department of Edu- cation did not respond with clarification.

Delinquency means you are late on a payment. At 60 days late, servicers notify credit reporting agencies. At 270 days late, the loan is in default and collections efforts begin, leading to consequences such as wage garnishment and seizure of tax refunds.

“Tens of millions of borrowers who’ve been having a tough time,” Buchanan said. “They’re still going to try to pay what they’re able to.”

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Betsy Mayotte, the Institute of Student Loan Advisors president, said kicking the can even more has been beneficial. “Borrowers pursuing (Public Service Loan Forgiveness) an extra five months toward their total. For borrowers in default pursuing loan rehabilitation, it’s another free month. For borrowers getting anxious about being able to afford payments when the waiver is lifted, it’s more time to determine their strategy.”

Despite the fact that the economy hasn’t recovered from the ongoing pandemic (the U.S. unemployment rate in November remained nearly twice as high as in February, at 5.7%, according to the most recent data from the Bureau on Labor Statistics), borrowers can expect their bills to arrive again and autpay- ments will resume Jan. 31.

“I think that should be petrifying for everyone,” said Randall, the Student Borrower Protection Center executive director. “Certainly, there are a number of questions about how this is happening in Washington and if there are any other bailouts and fees being left in the president’s to-do list. And I think if we have watched this closely, the idea of tens of millions of borrowers’ accounts being turned on in a few weeks is particularly serious. And the idea of being equitable will be the forbearance extended will be critical for borrowers who have been growing anxious about being able to afford payments when the waiver is lifted. It’s more time to determine their strategy.”

Randall said. “To me it’s an indicator that if Con- gress didn’t stay before or after school, but ev- eryone is wanting. We’re wanting them to learn more about geometry. And students aren’t giving that they will re- gress having done anything this time the waiver back, likely won’t make something other to the end. I think this could have been improved. If they didn’t have that feeling there they wouldn’t have extended by just a month,” said Mayotte.

Biden could act as early as Jan. 20. In- auguration Day, but has not specifically said a forbearance extension is among his plans. Broad loan forgiveness is, but stu- dent loan policy experts say not to hang on that happening quickly, if at all. 

Legislatively, efforts by House Demo- crats to end the current forbearance Sept. 30, 2021, have stalled. Another relief bill could include longer extensions of the forbearance; no detailed viable plan has yet emerged. For now, expect payments to restart sometime after Jan. 31.

What can borrowers expect in 2021?

“The situation lends itself to confusion. I’m not sure how to get out of that,” said Scott Buchanan, executive director of Student Loan Servicing Alliance. “It’s very hard for us, but we’re doing our best, and we do have hope for the best when it comes to extensions. Borrowers making payments for the first time should sift through the information and make sure they get the right one. For those who are used to it,” Buchanan said. “If they think they’ll have a tough time, they might want to enroll in an income-driven repayment plan.”

Borrowers who have earnings below a certain proportion becoming delinquent, at least initially.” The Department of Edu- cation did not respond with clarification.

Delinquency means you are late on a payment. At 60 days late, servicers notify credit reporting agencies. At 270 days late, the loan is in default and collections efforts begin, leading to consequences such as wage garnishment and seizure of tax refunds.

The payment pause, known as a forbearance, began March 13 as part of the original coronavirus relief package and was extended twice by the Trump administration, most recently through Jan. 31.

The payment has provided around 33 million borrowers with an interest-free reprieve from payments, preventing delinquency and subsequent default while allowing them to retain their best means at the economy's battered.
Native land wields important amid pandemic

The Cherokee Nation Tenure Foundation wants to resume its planning clinics once the pandemic subsides.

BY D. SEAN ROWLEY

OKLAHOMA CITY – With the COVID-19 pandemic reaching record occurrences in the U.S., many families are being faced with a daunting reality:

One effect among Native Americans has been the existence of landowners who are being left in limbo due to an unexplained death and no will.

The Cherokee Nation Tenure Foundation Native landowners to consider making out their wills.

"There are no other wills clinics available for Indian landowners to have," the foundation stated. "To date, it has been driven home by the premature deaths of loved ones, including family members, friends, and community members, including several who were in the process of writing their wills with assistance from the American Indian

The Cherokee Nation is securing a multi-use site in Rogers County, which will house a virtual production soundstage and warehouse for food and PPE storage and distribution.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been harder on rural Indians than many non-Indians, and it's important that we take a multi-pronged approach to our efforts to mitigate the pandemic by bolstering the tribe's health and safety communications efforts and Cherokee language and cultural preservation efforts, while the warehouse will serve as a hub for the distribution of COVID-19 relief goods to the northern portion of the tribe's reservation.

"We are committed to developing new language preservation programs while ensuring we use the best safety protocols possible to protect our citizens safe during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Chief Judge Chuck Hoskin Jr.

"We are proud to launch a multi-purpose facility that will help ensure Cherokee Nation citizens living under one roof," Hoskin said. "With the new clinic, we will continue our work with Native landowners to create and organize their affairs and develop a legally binding will through the CNB.

"The transportation and construction side with the Federal Highway Administration has been operating under a program agreement, which is a quasi self-governance arrangement. It's our goal to make these programs permanent, so that we have that self-governance option available, it's impactful and flexible."

Lynn said he’s working with CN administration and the Office of Tribes for land-based transportation and construction projects.

"Our goal is to seek a self-governance arrangement with the United States Department of Justice projects created protocol for land-based transportation and construction projects that we have tried to find a one-size-fits-all solution when what may work in Oklahoma doesn’t apply in other states," he said.

The Cherokee Nation is securing a multi-use site in Rogers County, which will house a virtual production soundstage and warehouse for food and PPE storage and distribution.

"It's a huge step forward for Native Americans to have a facility," Hoskin said. "This is a facility that we have been asking for years, and it will be a game changer for our tribe and Cherokee Nation Businesses. It will also allow the tribe to engage in strategic food warehousing, essential for the CN to mitigate the pandemic.

"The food and warehouse will allow the tribe to respond to the needs of our citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CN will manage the portion designated for warehouse and distribution. We’ve aggressively pursued and acquired strategic food distribution and warehouse facilities, and we’ve expanded our warehouse and distribution efforts, official said.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has created a sense of urgency in preserving our culture and language because we lack translators to help bridge the disease at alarming rates," said Lynn, who sits on the CN Tribal DNA Advisory Committee of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"There are so many levels of use for this new facility, which is designed to help facilitate that in Indian Country."

Respond, Recover and Rebuild

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"The clinic is meant to offer estate planning services for Native Americans residing in Oklahoma who are uninvolved in estate planning or have restricted allotments. Our clients are some of the strangers possible to keep our citizens safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will allow us to create content that will help stop the spread of COVID-19 and improve the ways our tribal government is able to communicate and share cultural lessons, including language, with our citizens," said Hoskin.

"We are committed to developing new language preservation programs while ensuring we use the best safety protocols possible to protect our citizens safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will allow us to create content that will help stop the spread of COVID-19 and improve the ways our tribal government is able to communicate and share cultural lessons, including language, with our citizens," said Hoskin.

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Sports betting not urgent issue for tribes

BY LINDSEY BARK

TULSA — For the past year and a half, Cherokee Nation citizen Cody Buzyn-Flynn has overseen the EPG (Edmondson Flynn Group) Design & Architecture Firm as its principal owner and chief operating officer and continues to do so as Native American-related endeavors. He receives Federal Trade Commission approval in August of 2021.

“Sports betting is not an urgent issue for tribal communities,” he said. “A part of our DNA with this firm since its inception has been to provide great architecture and design for our clients. We have a lot of tribal leaders and tribal governments across the country who are looking for services that we provide, and they want to be able to do more with less.”

Buzyn-Flynn said he has always had a wide range of various projects from custom residential projects to hospitality projects to projects in the education, health care, senior care, and senior living spaces. He received Federal trade Commission approval in August of 2021.

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A Cherokee artist's footsteps

BY ALLISON COCHRAN
University of Arkansas School of Journalism

SALINA – Traci Rabbit pushed her purple-tinted sun- glasses to the top of her head, moving her hair back with them. As she sat outside, the sun was going down on an Oklahoma fall evening. “As an artist, what we’re going through and what we’re experiencing will come out on canvas,” Rabbit said.

“I really enjoyed painting the Native American woman and showing her strengths, dignity, pride, even her vulnerable side,” Rabbit said.

Rabbit, 51, is a Cherokee artist who resides in Salina. She was recently named a Cherokee National Treasure for 2020 for her artwork.

The award is given to people who have made contri- butions to preserve art, language and culture within the Cherokee tribe. Though Rabbit was awarded this year, she’s no stranger to the honor.

Her father, Bill Rabbit, was also a Cherokee artist. Bill died in 2012 at age 65 due to years of complications from Agent Orange, the defoliant that was used in Vietnam for chemical warfare, Traci said. Bill served two tours of duty in Vietnam.

Bill is known for his Native paintings and had received awards for his artwork. He too was named a Cherokee National Treasure in 2011. For Traci, to follow in her father’s footsteps, it’s as if she was put into words. She said it’s just something she feels in her heart.

When she found out she was being awarded, Traci said, it was overwhelming and emotional for her but was humbling honor, she said.

Traci has many Native paintings, but she was given this honor because of her particular piece titled “Tran Actions.”

She revisited when her dad lost the award, saying that out of all of the awards he had won, the Cherokee National Treasure was the most special for him because he was being recognized by his people. Traci says she completely understands that feeling now.

Bill was also a full-time artist. Traci said her dad had been a full-time artist since 1976 Karen Rabbit, 75, Bill’s wife and Traci’s mom, said when her husband first became a full-time artist. Karen had just recently quit her job when her husband decided to be a permanent artist. She told him that if she had to, then she’d go back to work. Karen never had to go back to work because of his success as an artist. Finness could be tight at times, but everything worked out, Karen said.

Traci and Karen say that Bill didn’t have a particular style of painting. He probably died with more imagi- nation than most artists will ever have in a life,” Karen said.

Karen said he could sit down with a paint brush and canvases and just paint whatever he felt. He especially loved using bright colors.

Bill and Traci had a special relationship, and art was a factor that would make their bond so special.

“My mom once told me that the day I was born, my dad took me and never let me go,” Traci said. “We were very like-minded; we were two peas in a pod.”

Traci mainly learned how to paint through her father. “Not only did I have an exceptional parent, but I had a best friend, a mentor, a business partner, an art teacher. He was like five people in one person,” she said. “God blessed me with good parents.”

Traci said that she not only had a connection with him because he was her dad, but they also had a deep soul connection as well. “When you have that like-minded at- titude and the connection of art brought us even closer,” Karen said. Traci enjoyed sharing her perspective on that and that’s where their unique relationship started.

Karen said her daughter held her father on a pedestal. Traci has been a full-time artist since she graduated college in 1989. She never had any intentions on being an artist after graduation. She eagerly to work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs or Cherokee Nation. “God just had different plans for me,” she said.

After graduating, Traci immediately started working with her dad, mainly helping out on the business side of the art, but was also selling some of her work as well. Eventually, she began her full-time work as an artist as well.

Rabbit Studios, located in Pryor, is a working stu- dio where her father painted, which Traci still paints and operates at today. Rabbit Studios is also where the products of Traci’s full line of clothing, art tiles, mugs, mugs, mousepads and other merchandise is done. Merchandise and artwork can be found on her website.

When she first began painting, she said her first paintings were mainly of woodland style, which Traci describes of being more of a rural setting and trees, but she has since developed her style.

“Your art starts to evolve as you do as a human being,” she said. Traci enjoyed sharing her perspective of what a Native American woman should be, so her art started coming into a direction of painting Native wom- en, but her art is not limited to just that.

Traci said because she’s the daughter of someone who is a well-known artist, she initially wanted to paint some- thing that was different from her dad’s work and that she eventually grew into her technique of artwork.

Though she wanted her work to be different from her father’s, she said one of her favorite art pieces are the ones that she collaborated on with her dad. She holds special memories with those art pieces.

When her dad passed away, he was named a Cherokee National Treasure.

When her daughter held her father’s pedestal, she collaborated quite a bit. “I think that he was teaching me,” she said. “I think he was preparing for me when he went home.”

Karen said when her husband died she remembers her daughter was completely devastated and was not a func- tioning human for a while. She said when her daughter started painting again that she remembers telling her, “Traci, you don’t need your dad, you can do this on your own. Your art and your abilities stand on their own.”

Karen said her daughter has really come into her own in the past two to three years. She said she’s hard work- ing, just like her dad.

Traci said after her father’s passing, she was most proud because she kept pushing on.

Before Bill’s death, she remembers him saying, “Don’t ever be like a pond; a pond has stagnant water. When Traci and Karen said that when she started painting, her style was more of a rural setting and trees, but she has since developed her style.

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The 20th century saw a significant increase in the number of Native American women working in STEM fields. Mary Golda Ross, a member of the Cherokee Nation, is one such example.

Ross was born in 1915 in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics in 1928 and taught for nine years thereafter in rural Oklahoma schools. In 1942 and began working on the effects of pressure on advanced systems staff engineer and worked on the flyby missions to Venus and Mars.

LOS ANGELES (AP) - After ABC’s “Big Sky” drew Native American criticism for overlooking an epidemic of violence against indigenous women and girls, its producers decided to make changes. But the first, hurried steps were called “stupid” and “insulting” by Native leaders.

The reaction illustrates how even well-meaning creators may struggle with growing demands for diversity and authenticity, especially with an ethnic group that Hollywood has at best ignored and at worst stereotyped beyond recognition.

Shelly R. Fyant, chairwoman of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Montana, said she was blindsided by a request to use a tribal seal on the ABC series “Big Sky” when she was unaware the Flathead Nation tribe might be written into a scene.

The first “Big Sky” change was to add an on-screen credit noting resources for victims of sexual or labor trafficking. Then came revisions for the freshman drama, extended from its original eight-episode order to 16.

In a scene that was under consideration, for example, private detectives searching for the missing sisters meet with a tribal councilwoman who raises the crisis. Native actor Staci Mathis was hired for the role and agreed to act as a consultant, which she said included reviewing set decorations.

Among them: the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes said that producers were considering depicting Mathis’ copy of the script referred to the sisters, so she concluded they had already vetoed the story before she emailed Chairwoman Fyant to find out if it would be appropriate to use the seal.

Surprised and stung by the curt reply she received, Mathis, said she apologized to Fyant and requested not being better informed before reaching out. She doesn’t have second thoughts about being part of “Big Little Lies.”

“Being an advocate for this industry to portray the crisis in a way that’s hopefully going to empower other indigenous women to speak up. This would be written into a scene.

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