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New Leadership, New Vision

Stacy Leeds will bring a positive change to the Cherokee Nation. She is uniquely qualified to represent the Cherokee Nation at the local and national level without losing sight of what truly matters to the Cherokee people. She is an independent thinker with a deep respect for the rule of law and a commitment to improving the quality of life in our communities.

A few of Stacy's Priorities:

- Responsible and efficient management of tribal funds to increase services for elder health care, housing and education.
- Successfully diversify Cherokee businesses to provide private sector job stability for Cherokee people.
- Empowering and organizing our communities.
- Creating a government of the highest integrity that is accountable to the Cherokee people.

Stacy Leeds is a former Cherokee Supreme Court Justice, tenured Professor of Law and the Director of the Tribal Law and Government Center. Raised in Muskogee, she descends from the Leeds-Yates-Bean-Timberlake Cherokee family of Ft. Gibson. She and her husband, Michael Stewart, live north of Tahlequah.

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Rings around Saturn

There are two rather humorous statements made by John Ketcher and Cara Cowan Watts in that story that definitely needs to be addressed.

John Ketcher says that he never saw a black person until he was older. If you know anything about the community in which John Ketcher grew up, you will know why. John grew up in the Earbob community south of Locust Grove, Mayes County. The community was named for his grandmother Takey Earbob's family. It is mostly a full blood community surrounded by white settlements.

The Ketcher and Earbob families were among the most prominent of that community, which lies only five miles from Locust Grove, a small city of less than 1,000 souls. There was a small store in the Earbob community and a really good swimming hole at a place called Twin Bridges.

Like many of the families living in that area, John Ketcher's family made trips to Locust Grove to trade for items they could not produce themselves or purchase from the local store. The store of course was owned by a white family. And like so many of the so-called "full blood" communities in the Cherokee Nation, they were only full blood in name, not in blood. Because the Cherokees had become so mixed with white and negro ancestry in the pre-Civil War era, many families who were enrolled by the Dawes Commission as full bloods actually possessed some degree of white and/or negro ancestry. It was not uncommon for the Cherokee women of negro ancestry to hide their undesirable hair texture under a scarf and the men to hide their with short haircuts and big hats.

White was not the only blood coursing in the veins among the Cherokees residing in the Earbob community. John Ketcher himself is enrolled as 11/16th Cherokee. That leaves us with a questionable 5/16th blood of which Mr. Ketcher claims is white. However, a careful search

of the family records would probably reveal something quite different despite how his ancestors appear on the Dawes Roll.

Like many of the Cherokee/Black mixed bloods who spoke Cherokee and lived a life as a traditional Cherokee person, they chose to live among the full bloods undetected by the Dawes Commission and their racist efforts to classify all Cherokees of negro ancestry as Freedmen.

This scenario played itself out in community after community across the Cherokee Nation. In the Proctor Community, there is a cemetery prominently located in the center of the small berg. And at the heart of the cemetery is the largest headstone there and belonging to a woman named Emily Weaver.

Emily Weaver is the ancestor of many Cherokees by blood and was herself the daughter of William Crittenden, a Cherokee Indian of mixed white ancestry. However, Emily was enrolled by the Dawes Commission as a Freedmen. But the story does not end there. Emily, being the astute and well connected Cherokee woman that she had been before the arrival of the Dawes Commission, used her influence and family connections to get most of her mixed negro/Cherokee children placed on the by blood roll. As far as I can tell, only two of her six children were enrolled as Freedmen. The rest, due to her influence, were enrolled as Cherokees by blood and at least one of her descendants worked for the Cherokee Nation in the accounting department when I worked in enrollment.

In the very traditional Cherokee community of Cherry Tree, we find a man named John Vann, a Freedmen, who spoke both the English and Cherokee languages fluently. He was married to a full blood Cherokee woman and his descendants live today in that same community. Ironically, one of his granddaughters, Dora Mae Vann Watie, was the au-

thor of the 1983 rule which disenfranchised the Freedmen under the leadership of Ross O. Swimmer.

In Fort Gibson, a Cherokee woman named Mary Elliot found herself relegated to the Freedmen roll by the Dawes Commission, even though she was 3/8 Cherokee by blood, 1/8 Negro and 1/2 white. She had been married to a Cherokee by blood named John Kell French, whose stately historic family home stands on the corner of College and Keetoowah Streets in Tahlequah. John Kell French died before the Dawes Rolls were made and his two sons, along with their mother, and half brothers were placed on the Freedmen Roll, even though they had more Cherokee blood than anything else. Mary Elliott, late in her life, was honored by the City of Fort Gibson, sometime in the 1940s, as a Cherokee Princess.

Negro ancestry courses through the veins of many many Cherokee families whose ancestors chose to blur the lines between the Indian and negro races, just as many Cherokees had chose to do with whites. When you know the truth of how integrated the Freedmen were prior to the Dawes Commission efforts to segregate them from the rest of the Cherokee people, a vote to extricate them from the Cherokee Nation become ludicrous.

The other statement made by Cara Cowan Watts regarding her own ignorance of the Cherokee Freedmen would be hysterically funny if it were not a statement of the fact that she, like so many Cherokees, has been deprived of her own history by the state of Oklahoma and more recently by Chad Smith and his so-called "history course."

In the state of Oklahoma, we are required to study Oklahoma history for one semester in the 9th grade. This

history touches on the Indian Territory days, but does not go into detail, and intentionally ignores blacks, focusing instead on the development of the state of Oklahoma post 1907. Cara Cowan Watts is 1/256 degree of Cherokee blood. That itself would give one pause to wonder how she, being raised among whites, would know anything about Cherokee history or culture. If Saturn were the core of Cherokee life, Cara Cowan Watts would be one of the far outer rings orbiting the planet. She, like all Cherokees since statehood, has been deprived of the history of her Nation. However, she has refused to properly educate herself on the subject, instead clinging to her racist views and fears of losing her job on the council to the Freedmen vote.

I have been involved in Cherokee politics, culture, religion and daily life for the entirety of my life of 48 years and more particularly since 1976. I had NEVER heard of Cara Cowan Watts prior to her bid for a seat on the tribal council. By her standard against the Freedmen, she would not be a Cherokee because I would venture to guess that most Cherokees outside her own hometown have never heard of her. Fortunately for her and 90 percent of the unknowns of our tribe, that's not how we determine citizenship.

It is one thing to be ignorant of your own tribe's history. That is not Cara's or anyone's fault. It is her fault to remain ignorant. And it is the ultimate evil to perpetuate that ignorance in an effort to deny innocent people their rights and heritage.

David Cornsilk response to Freedmen, AP News Story! .



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You Got To Be Kidding! Chief Chad Smith has nominated Troy Poteete

he did not respond to memos, he did not provide information when requested by subordinates, or management, he did not act on problems (including those of a legal or regulatory nature). He, also, did not present clear and direct information to his board.

Decision-making - Despite board policies, he made decisions which were contrary to the governing body of the Society. And, in fact, refused to implement or acknowledge and adhere to regulatory procedures put forth by the board, contractors, grantors, the state and the FRS (the latter in matters concerning deductible contributions, labor laws, taxes and safety).

Personnel (Staffing) - Troy provided no personnel plan, vague job descriptions, undefined duties, no consistent evaluations, no standards or measures to evaluate job performance objectively. He had no chain of command. When he was away from the office, or the grounds (which was frequently), there was no one permitted to be in authority. He inappropriately used employees for personal gains, using them in positions they had no experience in, or giving them titles for which they had no prior education or skills... Troy made derogatory comments about his staff.

Problem Solving - Troy simply could not implement workable solutions to problems. He did not plan. The staff was without any direction, and few had any knowledge of their job responsibilities.

Safety - There were no safety regulations, or measures, in place when I arrived. Simple precautionary practices were ignored and will need to become a priority for the safety of the employees, records, the collection, the public and the facilities.

Management, Professional Conduct - Clearly, no sound understanding of planning, organizing, delegating, coordinating, professional development, and controlling. Development of Subordinates - Troy was inconsistent. He favored certain employees over others.

Documentation for the above information can be provided for your personal inspection, at your convenience, in the administrative office

of the Society. I believe that it is imperative that some of our communication, and documentation, be kept confidential, because I firmly believe that the Society may be investigated due to lack of compliance in some of our federal funding. The entire management staff (Linda King O'Seland, Carol Hinkley, Tom Mooney, Lee Fleming) is willing to openly discuss with you, as a Trustee, and others you and the Board deem appropriate, their knowledge and experiences regarding these matters.

Wilma, I point these areas out because they have a direct impact on the current condition of the Society. Despite Troy being gone, we have tried to pick up and go on with what needs to be done to make the Society succeed. Yet, Troy is still here! I spoke with him directly and he clearly has a vengeance for Carol Hinkley and remarked that "As long as she is there, the Society will never succeed. I am not the problem, she is." HE IS THE PROBLEM AND NEEDS PROFESSIONAL HELP. I have no time to put up with his hurt ego, his antics to jeopardize the employment of the current staff, undermining a major appropriation from the Cherokee Nation because of a personal vendetta he has with Carol.

To be positive, we are implementing our interim plan. We are excited to have each staff position defined with specific tasks and we will meet our stated goals. We will be ready for the new Executive Director Mac Harris this January 2, 1995. Please find the interim plan and specific statistics regarding our on-going development in fundraising and membership for the Society. end

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Address & phone # on page 2

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