

Jennifer Reeder

Candidate for Caddo Nation Secretary



My name is Jennifer Reeder and I'm a candidate for the position of Caddo Nation Secretary.

My Caddo heritage comes through my father, William "Bill" Reeder and my grandparents, Jesse Reeder and Ruth Wilson Reeder. I consider it a blessing to have been born and raised in Oklahoma around my Caddo family. Although I grew up in the Oklahoma City area, I spent many weekends and summers at my grandparent's house in the rural community of Scott, Oklahoma. That's where I found my love for our Caddo culture, customs, and people.

I have worked for tribal businesses and programs since 2004 when I began my career in marketing for Chickasaw Nation Industries, a tribal 8(a) company owned by the Nation. I later worked for the OU American Indian Diabetes Prevention Center until the grant ended in 2017. I currently work in public affairs for Indian Health Service headquarters. I hold a Master's of Business Administration from Oklahoma Christian University and a Master's of Legal Studies in Indigenous Peoples Law from the University of Oklahoma. I previously served on the tribal council from 2009-2013, first as the Oklahoma City Representative, and then I was appointed to finish out the term of Secretary. I ran for office again in 2015 and served as Secretary until 2017.

I have witnessed many years of infighting and disruption because we are still being governed under an outdated, boiler plate constitution given to the tribes by the government almost 100 years ago. It is for this reason, I will be making it a priority to form a constitutional reform committee consisting of tribal members and experts to guide discussions about updating and amending our tribal constitution to reflect issues from this century. It's critical for our constitution to include a tribal court or a mechanism to adjudicate tribal disputes through an outside court. Our tribe remains in constant chaos because there's no real checks and balances on our tribal officials. This has created a situation where all of the constitutional power has been consolidated in the hands of the tribal council, not the Caddo people. Although our constitution does allow for a Hearing Board, our Hearing Board has no real power. The only way the Caddo Nation will flourish under the tenets of self-sufficiency and self-determination is if we make a honest effort to strengthen our tribal constitution for all Caddo people, not just the few who wish to hold on to power.

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