

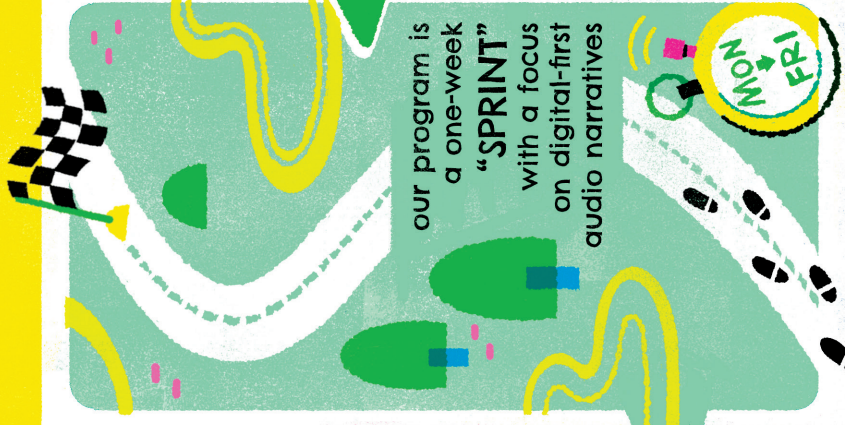
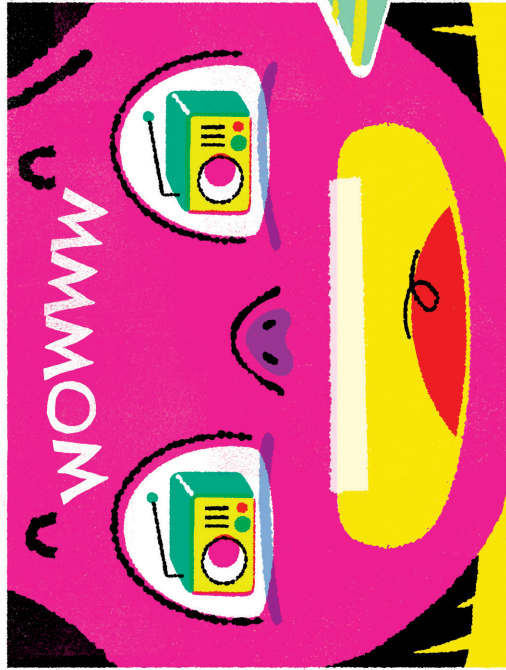
# NEXT GEN RADIO INDIGENOUS



October 2023

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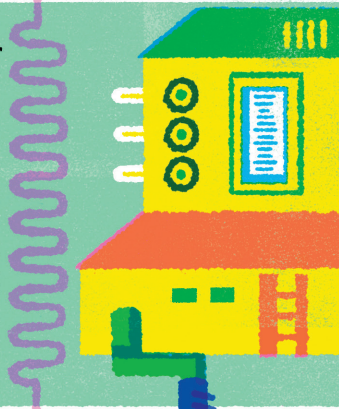
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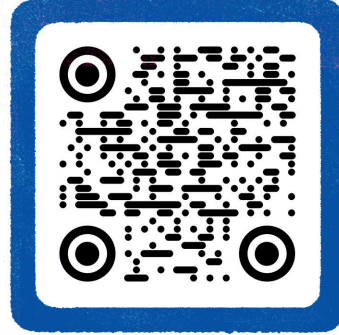
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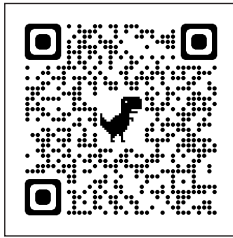


ILLUSTRATION BY YUNYI DAI

# At home on the Next Gen TRAIL

BY DOUG MITCHELL

I've been a fairly regular member of the (newly named) Indigenous Journalists Association since the early 2000s. I'm from Oklahoma, which is Choctaw for "Red People." There are 39 tribes in Oklahoma and nearly half its counties have names with some kind of tribal or Indigenous affiliation. While growing up here, my parents would occasionally take my siblings and I to pow-wows around my hometown. Jokingly, I have said we were the Black family in the line for fry bread. Based on some of this personal history, in 2020, I decided the Next Gen program should have a specifically acknowledged relationship with Indigenous storytellers and journalists. Now in 2023, we're doing three audio-focused, digital media sprints and I'm proud to say my home state is a regular stop on the Next Gen trail. You're familiar with the line, "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should." In this context, I flipped it to say, "It's because we can that we should."



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

The Next Generation Radio Project is a week-long digital journalism training project designed to give competitively selected participants, who are interested in radio and journalism, the skills and opportunity to report and produce their own multimedia story. Those chosen for the project are paired with a professional journalist who serves as their mentor. This #NPRNextGenRadio project was funded by Oklahoma State University and Indigenous Journalist Association and based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Zine cover artwork by Emily Whang Zine design by Amara Aguilar & Ard Su

## Meet the reporters



**Elena Johnson**

Elena Johnson is a student at Oklahoma State University, pursuing a bachelor's degree in strategic communication and a minor in Spanish. Following a four-year break from school, she is motivated and passionate about her studies. She hopes to gain more experience in photography and graphic design, as well as to weave her personal interests—social media and fashion trends—into her career.

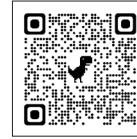


**Tylie Griffith**

*Member of the Cherokee Tribe*

Tylie Griffith Bookout is a Cherokee citizen from Collinsville, Oklahoma. She is a senior at Oklahoma State University studying multimedia journalism with a double minor in American Sign Language and marketing. Tylie is currently employed at the Center for Sovereign Nations (the Native American Student Resource Center) at OSU, running the center's social media and giving Indigenous students across campus a voice. She is also the OSU College of Arts and Sciences Student Council president, and enjoys leading those in her college toward success. Tylie hopes to use her education to pursue a career in tribal media after graduation.

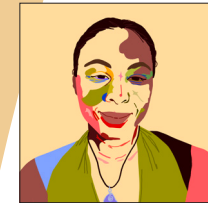
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARZADEH



**Grace Benally (she/her)**

*Member of the Navajo Nation*

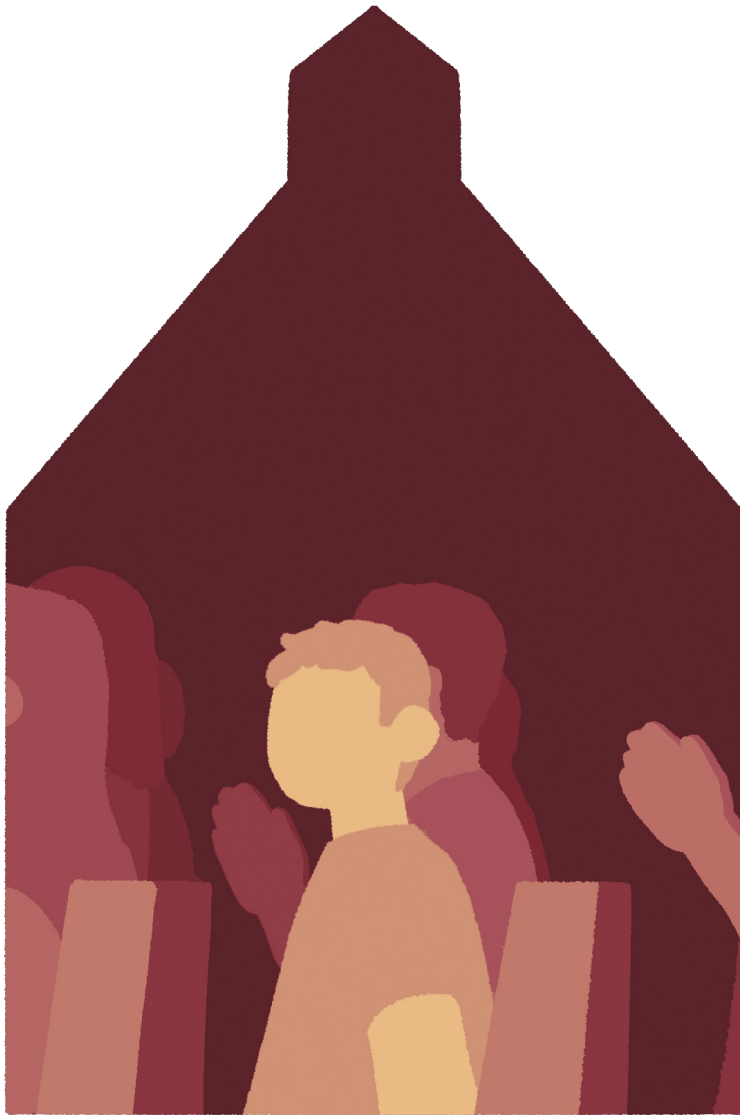
Grace Benally is Diné. Born in Shiprock, N.M., on the Navajo Nation, Grace later moved to Arizona to attend the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University. While pursuing a degree in journalism and mass communication, she developed a passion for writing about her community. It's Grace's goal to uplift the stories of Indigenous people, which she does as a social media coordinator for First Peoples Fund, a nonprofit focused on supporting Native artists and culture bearers. When Grace isn't working, she is either out watching a new movie, playing video games, or spending time with her corgi, Stark.



**Rahe-Wanitanama**

*Taino*

Rahe-Wanitanama is from Dolphin Head Forest Reserve, where they feel most at home tending their community's cassava field in the village of Askenish, near Garden Bush in western Jamaica. They're a managing editor and reporter at Dolphin Head Story Bridge, an interactive multimedia platform for sharing stories and cultural heritage. Rahe's goal is to help shape the narrative identity of the Ciboney Taino through multimedia journalism, and to facilitate emotional and psychological reparations for her people living in regional and diasporic communities. Previously Rahe was an Unscripted Fellow for Native American Media Alliance and a Leadership Fellow for NBCU Academy at NAHJ 2023.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY EMILY WHANG

# A sense of SAFETY & INDIGENOUS connection

*Joshua Wise on the meaning of home*



**BY ELENA JOHNSON**

**S**ome of Joshua Wise’s favorite childhood memories involve the caves and rock formations around Chandler Park in Tulsa, Okla. His grandmother, Bonnie Louise Strickland, used to take him hiking there as a kid, and he recalls the feeling of being young and having the freedom to climb around recklessly.

“Any time that I’m out in nature, it kind of reminds me of being out there with her,” says Wise. “It’s just a constant reminder of those good times.”

Wise, 41, is a stay-at-home dad and student at Tulsa Community College pursuing an associate’s degree in digital media. He grew up in Tulsa in a strict religious household and says he often felt alienated, with little freedom for self-expression.

“It was very, very scary as a kid growing up with that ... just the sense of this imaginary person always watching you,” Wise says. “I was always in fear.”

Early on, the family attended a Southern Baptist church,



Joshua Wise stands on a trail inside Chandler Park in Tulsa, Okla., on Monday, Oct. 2, 2023. “Any time that I’m out in nature, it kind of reminds me of being out there with her,” said Wise.

PHOTO BY ELENA JOHNSON/NEXTGENRADIO



but later moved to Free Will, a sect of Baptism, and a Charismatic church, a Christian denomination similar to Pentecostal. He remembers attending services with the threat of end times, and rituals like snake handling and speaking in tongues.

“I was, like, maybe 12 years old, and I didn’t really care for church anyway, so I was preoccupied with drawing a picture or something, and the minister snatched my sketch pad out of my hand, threw it on the ground, and told me that I needed to pay attention to him because his was the voice of God,” Wise explains. “And it really upset me because my dad was sitting right there and didn’t say anything. Just let it happen.”

In contrast, Wise’s grandmother provided him with acceptance and freedom for self-expression.

“My relationship with my grandmother was very close, to the point where I consider her more of a mother than my own,” Wise says. “She just nurtured me in a way that ... I didn’t feel ashamed to be unique, or kind of go against the grain, especially with my religious family.”

For him, spending time with his grandmother was an escape. Strickland was part Cherokee and made sure to

*“[She] definitely helped me form my own kind of view ... especially with the organized religion.”*

nurture Wise’s Indigenous identity, educating him about his heritage.

“[She] definitely helped me form my own kind of view ... especially with the organized religion,” Wise reflects. “It definitely had a big influence on me researching my ancestry and kind of understanding the practices and culture.”

Strickland took him to Indigenous pow-wows and events like the Green Onion Festival, a large community dinner hosted by tribes throughout Oklahoma. He even started his own research into the Delaware tribe, also known as the Lenape, who originated in what is now Philadelphia and New Jersey, that was absorbed into the Cherokee tribe.

Connecting with this Indigenous culture gave him a sense of community that he felt he never had growing up.

“Having that kind of sense of knowing I come from a bigger picture and have a bigger family than just what was at home made me feel a little bit more safe.”

And for Wise, that’s exactly what home means.

“The idea of home to me, especially after having kids, is pretty much the same as when I was a kid,” he explains. “I never really felt that safety, and so

I’m very focused on how my kids are feeling. I’m always asking them how they’re doing. I’m sure it’s annoying, but I just want them to have that sense of ... regardless of the situation, they can depend on me to be there or have that environment at home that there’s no judgment.”

He recalls a story of when he visited his grandmother in the hospital before she passed away. He walked into the hospital room with a bright red mohawk, and her eyes lit up and she smiled.

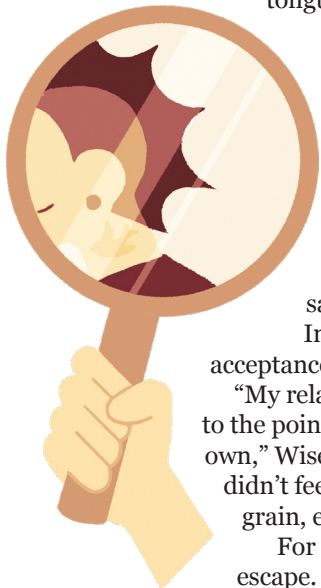
“Don’t ever change,” she said. “I love the way that you are now.”

It’s his close relationship with his grandmother that influenced how he raises his kids.



COURTESY OF JOSHUA WISE

Joshua Wise’s grandmother, Bonnie Louise Strickland, photographed in 1960, was a major influence in his life. He credits her with helping him feel secure in his identity.





**The "Magic Eight"**  
corn, beans, squash, tomatoes  
potatoes, vanilla, cacao, chiles

Blue Corn Cake

Three Sisters Soup

Pawpaw

# Celebrating Indigenous Foods

ILLUSTRATION BY YUNYI DAI

Baked Salmon  
Wild Rice

Navajo Taco

How Jamaican-born Rose Harvey captures home in Miami.

# FRAMING THE PAST



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SHIDEH GHANDEHARIZADEH

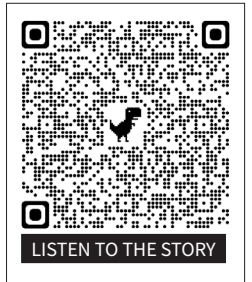
**BY RAHE-WANITANAMA**

**“W**hy I take photographs,” Rose Harvey muses, “is to keep home close.”

At age 86, Harvey has lived in Miami for over four decades. However, the essence of her birthplace lingers in her soul. The rhythms of her Jamaican-born Ciboney Taíno heritage pulse strongly within her.

Born amidst the natural beauty of Askenish, a village nestled amidst bountiful nature, Harvey’s upbringing was firmly rooted in family traditions. Garden Bush, one of several clan family plots surrounding the village, was originally owned by her grandfather James Elliot and epitomized these traditions. Passed down through generations, Garden Bush became a shared space for her mother Amelia, aunt Ellen and uncle James.

Because she wanted to travel, and “get a little bit more money in the pocket,” Harvey left Askenish in 1982 for the United States. For many young individuals seeking financial stability, the options often boil down to working in Kingston or moving abroad. Migrating to Miami was a significant transition for Harvey. Upon settling in the U.S., Harvey took up a role as a caregiver, consistently sending a portion of her earnings back to support her family in Askenish.



“I look at them sometimes, when I miss home.”

While her new life brought many changes, Harvey remained anchored to her homeland through a powerful medium: photography.

“I look at them sometimes,” she says, reflecting on her pictures, “when I miss home.” She began capturing images driven by a yearning for the familiar faces and places of Askenish.

Simple pleasures marked Harvey’s childhood. She was comforted by the aroma of traditional dishes like chocolate tea and bammy wafting through the air. Mornings with her cousins included caring for chickens, goats and pigs, and fetching spring water from the nearby mountain stream, followed by scenic walks to school under a canopy of breadfruit trees.

She still remembers how the mountain spring water tasted — “icy and fresh” — and she lovingly recalls her mother’s meticulous method of making chocolate tea.

“You pick the chocolate from off the tree when it’s ripe,” recites Harvey. “You break it, put it on a piece of zinc like two days. And when it’s dry, you put it into

a hot frying pan and get the skin off it. And then she beat it into a mortar and she roll it into the chocolate before boiling it.”

However, Harvey’s youth was not always so picturesque. She vividly remembers discovering her biological father’s grave while innocently playing ball.

“Well, maybe when I was six or seven ... My brother-in-law said, ‘Girl, you are chopping down your father’s grave.’ I said, ‘No, you are my father.’ It wasn’t until then that she understood the tragic circumstances of her father’s early departure. At the time of his sudden death, Harvey’s mother was eight months pregnant. Her eldest sister’s

husband, from a neighboring clan family, became her adoptive father. It was after this revelation that it became clear to Harvey that family is synonymous with community.

Harvey’s photos paint vivid stories. Every snapshot is a cherished memory — from her sister-in-law humorously trying to cook with a banana in hand, a scene that paints a picture of



Rose Harvey, 86, sits thoughtfully in her South Florida home on Monday, October 2, 2023. “I may be far away, but my heart is always with home.”

PHOTO BY RAHE-WANITANAMA / NEXTGENRADIO

everyday life, to her niece’s daughter visiting, an image that carries the familiarity of gatherings in her beloved village. These photographs, teeming with laughter, warmth and familial bonds provide Harvey solace, offering a comforting refuge amidst her bustling Miami life.

No matter where she is, Askenish remains Harvey’s true home, its familiar sights, sounds and scents irreplaceable. Her photographs aren’t just about the past. They are windows to her life’s journey, intertwining her Askenish origins with her Miami experiences.

“I don’t consider Miami my home; it doesn’t really feel like home. I feel like I’m home once I reach Jamaica,” Harvey says. “That’s my country. That’s where I was born.”

Despite living for over four decades in Florida, Harvey invariably gravitates back to Askenish. Journeying back to Jamaica every six months, especially during the dry season, which includes Christmas and Easter, her returns make for nostalgic reunions.

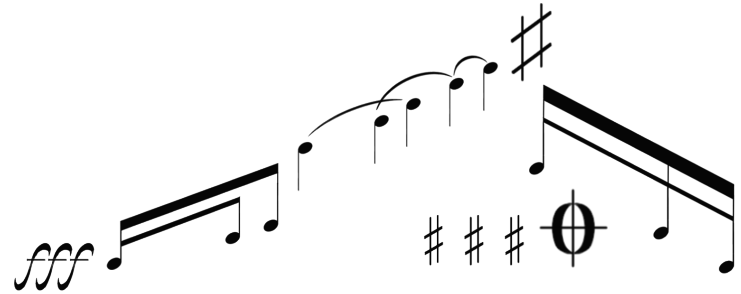
She has witnessed the transformation of Askenish over time: nature flourished as the young departed seeking opportunities elsewhere, and familiar establishments in central Askenish, such as the post office, clinic and supermarket shuttered their doors.

Trees grew abundantly, and the land seemed to revert to its untouched beauty. Even amidst the village’s metamorphosis, its essence remained intact. This evolving landscape, captured through Harvey’s lens, tells a tale of change and constancy.

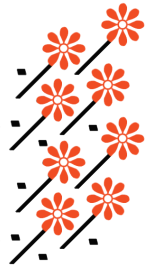
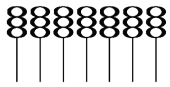
“The land is still there. It cannot be moved,” Harvey laughs. “It’s still there.”

Harvey declares she has “retired from photography, retired from everything.” From her home in Miami, her extensive visual archive remains a testament to her deep connection with Askenish. These photographs transcend time, connecting her with the homeland she cherishes and the memories she holds dear.





# Indigenous vocalist brings a sense of *home* to their audience through soulful lyrics



by Grace Benally

Atop the overpass by the intersection of South Boston Avenue and East First Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma, 29-year-old Madame Zeroni is embraced by the blowing wind in their hair. They stood in the so-called “Center of the Universe,” a location in downtown Tulsa marked with a small concrete circle in the middle of a larger circle of bricks, small lights illuminating the center.

“There’s a pathway that leads directly into the middle [of the “Center of the Universe”] and the closer you get to it, the more the sound echoes. It kind of sounds like you’re in a room,” Zeroni said.

Taking a deep breath, they slowly began their song, and the overpass acted as center stage, amplifying the echo of their voice in the concealed acoustic cavity in the ground.

Madame Zeroni is an artist, filmmaker and musician. Their legal name is Tomisha Riddle, but prefer to go by their stage name, which they chose after seeing the 2003 movie *Holes*. It was Eartha Kitt’s performance as Madame Zeroni in the movie as well as her music that motivated them to pursue a passion for filmmaking and music.

Zeroni, Chickasaw and Muskogee Creek and a citizen of the Choctaw Nation, grew up in a family of musicians and developed a love for music early on. They spent their childhood moving around southeastern Oklahoma.

“I remember being two, and then waking up and having to leave, or suddenly sleeping in the car because we’re homeless now. I think we were homeless twice. And so, there were lots of times where we had to stay up [and not rest],” Zeroni said.

This constant change, along with a



difficult homelife, affected Zeroni’s sense of home. They looked for refuge in music, which brought them a sense of comfort and belonging, making them feel safe.

“I grew up in a hostile environment, and if I couldn’t listen to music, I just felt like running away, you know?” Zeroni said.

Zeroni was homeschooled until their senior year of high school and didn’t have many friends. When they moved to Tulsa and started to make friends, the Center of the Universe became a place they would go often.

Now visiting the Center of the Universe always fills Zeroni with nostalgia for happy times during their otherwise isolated adolescence.

“Home means having a place to rest ... I didn’t grow up in the most cushioned environment. My environment was very hostile, and it was very controlled,” Zeroni said.



Illustration by Yunyi Dai

“ *This city, Tulsa, shares a sense of home by being so dynamic. We have different groups of artists you can kind of float in and out of. And each group is very supportive of the other.* ”

As an adult in Tulsa, they delved into filmmaking, and worked on *Osiyo: Voices of the Cherokee People*, an Emmy-winning documentary TV show that showcases the stories of the people, places, history, culture, and language of the Cherokee Nation.

“This city, Tulsa, shares a sense of home by being so dynamic. We have different groups of artists you can kind of float in and out of. And each group is very supportive of the other,” Zeroni said.

In their music career, Zeroni ventures into a realm of imagination, embodying different objects and animals.

“I reflect animals in my cadence whenever I sing and whenever I write. With [my song] ‘Mellow Meadow,’ I wrote that like a tree. And the leaves falling ... And then sometimes the perspective changes too ... I guess I write in 5D,” they said.

Zeroni’s goal with each note and lyric is to cleanse their audiences, liberating them from any negativity that might have trailed them into the venue.



Madame Zeroni performs at a musical showcase, Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023, hosted by Community Art Home in Tulsa

PHOTO BY GABIE CASTANEDA / NEXTGENRADIO

“I’ve had enough people come up to me after shows and be like, I don’t know what you just did, but that was amazing,” Zeroni said. “I think there’s a magical element to my performances. I couldn’t tell you specifically what it is, It’s my hope that I give your soul the hug that it needed.”

In their creative work, Zeroni incorporates inspirations from their Indigenous cultures, recalling that Choctaws are also known as “peacekeepers,” which represents how their music can sound to the listener.

“I think through music our ancestors can help us create,” Zeroni said. “That sense of home in terms of where we come from. Because we didn’t come here originally, and I think there’s still some, like, even though we’re connected to the land, we’re not connected to our land, you know?”

When they are onstage, Zeroni aims to create a world where the surroundings fade into

the background, immersing themselves in the music, and providing a safe haven for their audience.

“When I come in, I’m gonna quickly sweep up whatever’s on the inside of you, and I’m gonna throw it in the trash and take it away,” Zeroni said. “And then I’m gonna sing to your child self, and make them feel all nostalgic and happy, and hopefully at the end of this performance, you’ll feel a little lighter than when you came.”



LISTEN TO THE STORY

# Reviving Roots: How an Indigenous Professor Finds Her Home

by Tylie Griffith



“My dad’s sister died upstairs, when she was 10 years old, of spinal meningitis.”

Built with old, tan stone and rectangular windows with splintering, white wooden trim, the Pawnee Tribal Administration building has extensive history. A long walkway sits in front, a wide and welcoming entrance to all. Dawna Riding In Hare worked there for over two decades.

“Her younger sister, who was 8 years old, sat on the stairs right out there,” she said, pointing, “and cried when she found out. And so I worked in the building with their memories.”

Riding In Hare sat at the head of a wooden table in a small conference room, the afternoon light spilling warmly through faded white curtains. Sixty-five years ago, this had been the girls dormitory for the Pawnee Indian Boarding School — the very same

boarding school her father and two aunts attended.

Riding In Hare, a professor of Native American studies, believes it is vital to keep alive the stories of those who came before her.

That includes stories about her father’s experiences as a teacher. Old vanilla papers were splayed out on the desk in front of her.

“I have some letters from 1968, which I found in my dad’s stuff,” she said. “I think the writing assignment was, ‘What is a good teacher?’ I looked at these dates, and my dad had just transferred from this school. ... Those are just letters, and the ones that really stuck out to me [were] the ones where they kept talking about how he explained things to them.”





Letters written by her father's school students in 1968, as well as letters written to home by her late aunt Clarice in 1940, only a few months before she passed. "My dad's sister died upstairs when she was 10 years old of spinal meningitis," said Riding in Hare. "Her younger sister, who was 8 years old, sat on the stairs right out there and cried when she found out."

PHOTO BY TYLIE GRIFFITH BOOKOUT / NEXTGENRADIO

Like her parents, Riding In Hare is an educator. A professor at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma, she teaches Intro to American Indian Studies, lecturing on American Indian history, culture, societal issues and important topics pertaining to Native American people. She also teaches American Indian Sovereignty, a course on tribal sovereignty, law, culture and politics.

Whether on the OSU campus or in Pawnee, Oklahoma, she can

hardly step into an environment without someone rushing to talk to her. When she walks into the Pawnee Tribal Administration Building, all the workers call her name to say hello. Her tall frame, long silver hair, colorful dangling earrings and warm smile are easily recognizable.

Her parents were educators of Indigenous youth, so Riding In Hare grew up on the Navajo reservation, the Cheyenne reservation in Montana, and in Durant, Oklahoma, but



Riding in Hare stands in front of the Pawnee Indian School's girls dormitory, Monday, Oct. 15, 2023, now converted to the Pawnee Tribal Administration Office where she worked for 24 years.

PHOTO BY TYLIE GRIFFITH BOOKOUT / NEXTGENRADIO

**“ I do it for my grandparents. I do it my for my father. Though they're not with us anymore, I would always want them to be proud of me and how I represent the Pawnee Nation. ”**

notsmall, little lady,” Riding In Hare said affectionately. “But I always felt so safe with her. I always felt that, because of the respect that people had for her, that I was always safe, right by her side. Even during political times, you know, when there was a lot of conflict politically, I knew that if I was next to her, that I was safe.”

Riding In Hare takes pride in her Pawnee heritage, finding her home in the Pawnee lands in Oklahoma because of the stories and memories of her family that are deeply woven in.

“I've lived a lot of places,” she said. “But I've never felt the contentment that I have living here.

And it's kind of like a magnet, you know, and it draws people back.”



**LISTEN TO THE STORY**

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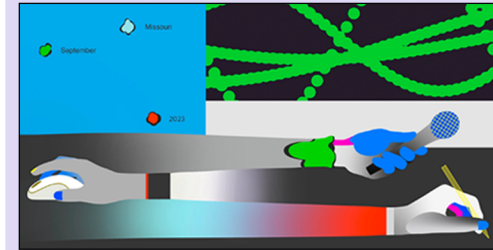


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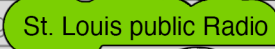
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