



Chief Gary Batton is the 47th Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the third largest Indian tribe in the United States. Chief Batton assumed his current position with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma on April 28, 2014, upon the retirement of Chief Gregory E. Pyle. He maintained the position by a vote of the Choctaw People in the July 2015 general election.

Gary Batton began his career with the Choctaw Nation in 1987 as a clerk in the Purchasing Department while he was attending Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Upon graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management in 1989, he accepted the position of Deputy Director at the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority. While at Housing, he was responsible for the management of Housing Authority operations and established several programs including the Choctaw Nation Drug Elimination Program, Family Investment Center Program and the Choctaw Nation Boys and Girls Club.

In 1997, he was appointed to the position of Executive Director of Health. His first undertaking after stepping into the role was replacing the Choctaw Nation Hospital, a former Tuberculosis Center constructed in the 1930s, with the state-of-the-art Choctaw Nation Health Care Center, the first tribally funded health facility in the United States.

He continued to expand and improve the Choctaw health system by adding clinics in Idabel, Stigler and Atoka and replacing or expanding outdated, inadequate clinics in Hugo, Broken Bow and McAlester. He constructed a new facility for adult inpatient alcohol and drug treatment and a hospitality house for patients traveling long distances for appointments at the health care center in Taliaina.

Concerned by the fact that some tribal businesses were not profitable and impressed with the growth and improvements to the health system, Chief Pyle appointed Gary to the position of Assistant Chief in May 2007. Gary immediately took action to grow the businesses and improve the profitability for the benefit of Choctaw members.

As the Assistant Chief, Gary's focus changed from improving the health system for tribal members to growing and improving the entire Choctaw Nation for the benefit of tribal members. Among his numerous duties, he served as Chairman of the Choctaw Nation Business Committee where his first initiative was the development of an economic plan that consisted of \$385 million in construction to expand the gaming facilities in Durant, Grant, McAlester and Stringtown. This plan was a boost to the economy in the 10 1/2 counties and created more than 700 jobs for the area. Under Gary's guidance, the profitability for all Tribal businesses improved with an overall increase of 69%.

After being sworn into office, Chief Batton set a clear direction in his inaugural address indicating a specific vision for his administration. He spends countless hours in the communities with the tribal members he serves. He believes his main purpose is to create a better future for the Choctaw people. He works to protect their culture, provide opportunities for education, employment, improved healthcare, and ultimately, do what is best for Choctaws.

Under Chief Batton's administration, the Choctaw Nation opened a large expansion to its health clinic in Poteau, three new wellness centers, two Chili's franchises, a Travel Plaza in Antlers, an expansion to its resort in Durant, a community center in McAlester, two food distribution centers and a new independent living community for Choctaw elders. Chief Batton also created several new programs like the Next Step supplemental food program, Reintegration and Job for the Day to assist tribal members. The additional facilities and programs added more than 1,000 jobs to southeastern Oklahoma during his first year in office.

The growth continues with numerous projects in the planning and construction phase. These include wellness centers, a community center, a regional health clinic, a travel plaza and a new tribal headquarters just to name a few.

Chief Batton and his wife, Angie, make their home in Clayton, Oklahoma. They have two children, Stacy and David, and two grandchildren.