

## **Biographical Information for William Harris Chief, Catawba Indian Nation**

**“Public Witness Hearing for Fiscal Year 2018: American Indian/Alaska Native Programs”  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**

**May 17, 2017**

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William “Bill” Harris is the elected Chief of the Catawba Indian Nation in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Chief Harris has been involved in tribal politics for over 20 years, using his role as a tribal leader to advocate for the rights of the Catawba people and for the enforcement of the Catawba Constitution. He works diligently to strengthen the government-to-government relationship and he has testified before Congress on numerous occasions on significant matters impacting Indian Country.

Chief Harris’s Catawba roots are deep and he is proud of his heritage. His father is Floyd William Harris. His grandfather, Douglas Harris, was a Chief of the Catawba Nation and his grandmother, Georgia, was a talented potter who was instrumental in preserving the Catawba people’s four thousand year-old art form. She passed her love for the art form to Chief Harris, who is now an accomplished traditional potter in his own right.

Chief Harris was born and raised near the Catawba reservation in upstate South Carolina. He worked as a self-employed craftsman for most of his adult life. During his time as Chief, Bill has made it his priority to serve the Catawba people to the best of his ability. He has represented the Tribe in diverse capacities, including serving on the USET Board of Directors, South Carolina Native American Advisory Committee, and RFATS Policy Committee. He also serves on the Direct Service Tribe’s Advisory Committee for the Indian Health Service. These organizations represent federal, state, and local levels of government. All of this while still being accessible to the Catawba people and leading decisions at the tribal level.

In his limited spare time, Chief Harris uses the opportunity to practice the craft of making his Nation’s pottery. In doing so, he feels bound to his ancestors, and he becomes another link in the chain that connects the Catawba people’s past to their future.