

Biography Of Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais



Cheryl Andrews-Maltais is the Chairwoman of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah. The Tribe is located on the Island of Noepe (commonly known as Martha's Vineyard), off the coast of Massachusetts. They are known as *The People of The First Light*. The Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe has been Federally Recognized for over 36 years. The Tribe has enjoyed Self-Governance status for over 22 years with both the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Until 2015, it was the only Tribal Nation in the BIA's Eastern Region to enjoy that status.

Now in her 5th term as Tribal Council Chairwoman, Mrs. Maltais has served the Tribe in this role for about thirteen (13) years. Mrs. Maltais also serves on the Board of Directors of the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET), the Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee as the delegate for the Eastern Region, and the Indian Health Service Office of Self-Governance Advisory Committee as the alternate delegate for the Nashville Area. She also serves on the Tribal Interior Budget Council (TIBC) as the delegate for the Eastern Region, and she serves as an at-large delegate on the Health and Human Services Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (HHS-STAC). Additionally, Mrs. Maltais serves on the Homeland Security Advisory Council, and as Chairwoman of the Government Accountability Office - Tribal and Indigenous Advisory Council (GAO-TIAC). At home, Mrs. Maltais serves on the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribal Cultural and Historic Commission and is the Chairwoman of the Aquinnah Wampanoag Gaming Corporation. Recently Mrs. Maltais completed her service on the Center for Disease Control Tribal Advisory Committee as well as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration Tribal Advisory Committee. In 2019, Mrs. Maltais was honored as a "Woman of the Year" by National Indian Women Sporting Each Other, and she was inducted into the 2022 Women Empowering Women for Indigenous Nations (WEWIN) "Warrior Women's Circle". Mrs. Maltais is also a champion Eastern Traditional Dancer and long-time Cultural Practitioner.

Before being re-elected to her 3rd term as Chairwoman, Mrs. Maltais completed a Presidential appointment in Washington DC for the Obama Administration as the first known Tribal Leader to become a Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. Her professional experience combined with her extensive tribal government knowledge and experience provided the expertise necessary to manage a diverse portfolio of issues; from federal recognition, to tribal self-governance, to historic preservation and Sacred Sites' protections, to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) regulations, to tribal consultations, to domestic and international issues on women's rights and protections, to international repatriation. She represented Indian Affairs at the United Nations and has testified before Congress on various legislation affecting Indian Country.

Before entering tribal politics, Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais served as the Tribe's first official Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO). There, she was responsible for ensuring federal agency compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Environmental Protection Act and Executive Order 13175 regarding Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes. Prior to serving as THPO, she also served as the Tribal Administration's Personnel Director and Office Manager responsible for the development and implementation of Tribal employment and operations policies and practices, consistent with applicable federal laws. She also served in the capacity as an At-Large Tribal Council Member before working full time for the Tribe. Prior to her work in tribal governance, Mrs. Maltais was the Northeast Regional Sales Manager of a logistics company based in Fairhaven, MA. And before that position, she lived and worked in Boston MA, supervising the production of coursework materials for a Fortune 500 management and performance consulting company, and, as the supervisor of the secondary market division of a mortgage company.

Mrs. Maltais and her husband Daniel Maltais have been happily married for 31 years and together they have a daughter, Samantha, who is currently completing her final year at Harvard Law School. Samantha is the first person in the Wampanoag Tribal Nation to attend Harvard Law School and intends to pursue a career in Indian law.