

## **PRINCIPAL CHIEF BILL JOHN BAKER**

Bill John Baker is the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, the largest sovereign tribal government in the United States. Born and raised in Cherokee County, Chief Baker has devoted much of his life in service to the Cherokee people.

He spent 12 years as a member of the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council and was elected Principal Chief in October 2011 and re-elected in July 2015. As a member of the council, Chief Baker worked tirelessly to improve education, health care and job creation throughout the Cherokee Nation.

Chief Baker believes in integrity, accountability and honesty. Those are the things he brings to the office of Principal Chief. During his tenure as Chief, he has made a commitment to homes, health and hope for Cherokee people. Under his leadership, new home construction resumed for the first time in a decade, a \$100 Million dollar allocation from business profits was invested to expand the tribe's health care system and more Cherokee citizens are working for the tribe and its businesses than at any time in history.

Under his leadership, more academic scholarships have been awarded to Cherokee students and every eligible applicant earned a Cherokee Nation academic scholarship last year. As Chief, he authored executive orders which raised the tribe's minimum wage and the granted paid maternity leave for new mothers.

Chief Baker secured an historic hunting and fishing compact with the State of Oklahoma and expanded the tribe's car tag compact for Cherokee Nation citizens statewide, which provided more than \$4.7 million to public education in northeast Oklahoma, just this year alone.

With more than 330,000 tribal citizens, and nearly 9,000 employees, the Cherokee Nation is one of the largest employers in northeastern Oklahoma and has an annual economic impact in Oklahoma of more than \$1.5 billion dollars.

Chief Baker is a graduate of Tahlequah High School and Northeastern State University. He earned degrees in political science and history. He has also been a small business owner for more than 40 years. Chief Baker resides in Tahlequah with his wife, Sherry (Robertson) Baker. They have been blessed with six children and are the proud grandparents of ten.