

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01AM EST MONDAY, OCTOBER 9**

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## **CHEROKEE MUSEUM REBRANDS AS MUSEUM OF THE CHEROKEE PEOPLE**

New name and visual brand reflect renewed commitment to community



# Museum of the Cherokee People

CHEROKEE, NC: A museum in Cherokee, North Carolina on the Qualla Boundary, the sovereign land of the federally recognized Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), has a new visual brand and name: CWY

TJBOΘA TSYF OΘA DΘIhAVJ (Tsalagi idiyvwiyahí igatseli uweti asquanigododi), Museum of the Cherokee People.

The developments, publicly announced on October 9, Indigenous Peoples' Day, affirm the 75-year-old institution's mission to preserve and perpetuate the history, culture, and stories of the Cherokee people through its exhibitions, collections, and programs. The independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and official repository for the tribe, formerly known as the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, first shared the news with its tribal community on October 3 during the 111<sup>th</sup> Annual Cherokee Indian Fair Parade.

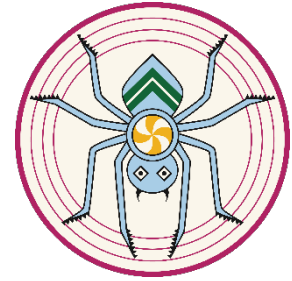
Adopting an inclusive new name punctuates the organization's commitment to serving its tribal citizens first and foremost. For the Museum's estimated 83,000 annual visitors, the name serves as a reminder of the vibrant, living culture the institution interprets and shares. "We are fortunate to have a staff and board who are interested in self-reflection, and thinking about the name and who we are and our mission, vision, and values has been a long conversation," says Executive Director Shana Bushyhead Condill (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians). "The name change wasn't quick—it was something that was very intentional and very thoughtful."

In Cherokee, "Museum of the Cherokee People" approximately translates to: "All of us are Cherokee people. It is all of ours, where the old things are stored." Museum leadership worked closely with board member and language speaker Marie Junaluska (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians) and the Cherokee Speakers Council to determine the Museum's Cherokee name.

The sleek, contemporary rebrand was designed in-house by Tyra Maney (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Diné). "One of the challenges for Native organizations is finding designers who can put who we are into font, or color, or logos," says Condill. "For so long, Native people have been falsely represented in media, so it can be difficult for designers to break free from those walls. Tyra's vision is intentional and thoughtful, and she is not afraid of pushing the envelope and challenging people's expectations."

Maney's electrifying color palette subverts "traditional" earth tones often associated with Native brands—browns, ochres, reds—and directly samples from the flora and fauna of Cherokee

ancestral homelands: blackberries, evergreens, rhododendron trees, the mountains' blue haze, touch-me-not flowers. "I want people to rethink what they think of when they hear the word 'earth tones' and reflect who we are and where we come from," Maney says.



The Museum's long-held logo, a water spider taken directly from a Mississippian gorget design, also received a thoughtful update laden with references to the Museum's mission, vision, and values. "I hope, with this new rebrand, Cherokee people feel represented," says Maney.

As a tribal citizen, Maney is excited about the Museum's new name. "I feel it's inclusive," she shares. "With the word 'Indian,' some Cherokee people like it, some are indifferent, and others don't identify with it—I felt like it wasn't representative of our community if the Museum had a name that excluded part of our community. A lot of times Cherokees are depicted as historical figures, and we even have visitors who don't always know we're still here. I hope this gives a new meaning and new interpretation of who we are as people and shows that we're constantly changing and adapting."

The Museum of the Cherokee People also offers a first look at its new website, MotCP.org, on October 9. A fully updated website with improved user experience and resources for tribal citizens and visitors will shortly follow. The rebrand is a small step in a new direction for the Museum, with future plans including an [offsite collections facility](#), updates to its public facility, and the development a new main exhibition. The Museum's current main exhibition, first opened in 1998, will be on view through December 29, 2023 before it closes to begin updates. A Collections grant of \$75,000 from the Terra Foundation for American Art will advance scholarly research to inform new interpretation forged through community input and development and scholarly research by Native scholars. [Disruption](#), an artist intervention of the main exhibit responding to the removal of funerary and ceremonial objects, is also on view through December 29, 2023.

"We have ambitious plans," Condill affirms. "When I think of what our jobs are here at the Museum, it's to authentically represent who we are as Eastern Band citizens. We hope our Cherokee citizens feel proud of this Museum and proud of the name. This change is so important to what we're doing here."

***Photos, logos, and photography guide are downloadable via [WeTransfer](#).***

### **About the Museum of the Cherokee People**

Established in 1948, the Museum of the Cherokee People is one of the longest-operating tribal museums in the country. Located in Cherokee, North Carolina on the Qualla Boundary, the sovereign land of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and ancestral homelands of all

Cherokees, the Museum shares the history, culture, and stories of the Cherokee people through its exhibitions, collections, and programs. Learn more at [mci.org](http://mci.org) (beginning October 9: [motcp.org](http://motcp.org)).