



MODOC NATION
THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

October 15, 2022

To my fellow Modocs,

It is with great sadness that I share the news that former Chief Bill G. Follis walked on peacefully on October 14, 2022. He was 89 years old.

The great-grandson of Long Jim, the youngest warrior in the Modoc War of 1872-1873 who fought in the lava beds of California, and Annie Jim, sister of Modoc warrior Shacknasty Jim, Chief Follis descended from a family that has been integral to the government of the Modoc Nation following their removal to Indian Territory, present-day Oklahoma.

An extraordinary leader, Chief Follis was a champion for the Modoc people. He was instrumental in the restoration of the Modoc Nation to federal recognition in 1978. He had served as the Chief for nearly 50 years - an incredible tenure of its own in modern tribal leadership. Through more than 12 consecutive terms in office, Chief Follis oversaw the growth of the Modoc Nation as a government and the establishment of many support programs for the Modoc people.

In addition to his service as Chief, he was a pillar in the community of Miami and in the State of Oklahoma. He served on various boards, including the Oklahoma State University Foundation, Rogers State University, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Task Force under the George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations, the Claremore Indian Hospital, the Northeastern Indian Tribal Health Clinic, and served as Chairman of the Oklahoma Commission on Indian Affairs. He worked with a nationwide collective of Tribal leaders, United States Presidents and Cabinet Members, Supreme Court Justices, State Governors, and countless elected officials at all levels.

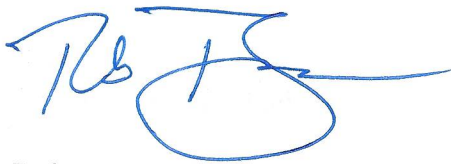
Through working with local, state, federal, and tribal leaders, Chief Follis negotiated a joint-compact to open the Stables Casino. This joint-compact was the first approved by the National Indian Gaming Commission and the Secretary of Interior. He founded many other economic ventures to benefit the Modoc Nation for generations to come.

Education, health initiatives, child and elder care, and housing support programs were at the forefront of his priorities and his accomplished benefits to the Modoc people. His efforts have sent many first generation students and graduate students to great accomplishments academically and professionally. A common saying from the Chief was "we will give you a hand up, but not a handout." This sentiment was expressed to convey his hope for recipients to continue working toward their own self sufficiency, so that others may have the same opportunity in the future.

Outside of tribal and civic service, he was devoted husband of 65 years, a father, a grandfather, and a great-grandfather. He was an accomplished Navy pilot, entrepreneur, cattle rancher, horse trainer, and all-around award winning cowboy.

While the loss of Chief Follis and his leadership is immense, he leaves the Modoc Nation with a foundation that will provide for generations to come. We thank him for everything that he did for the benefit of the Modoc people, and we thank his family for their dedication and immeasurable involvement with his long tenured service to the Modoc Nation. Our thoughts, and prayers and condolences go out to them. I ask for you to respect the privacy of Chief Follis' family and during this difficult time, and will share further details concerning his memorial service as they become available.

Sep'keeca, Chief Follis. We will all miss you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'RB' followed by a stylized flourish.

Robert Burkybile III
Modoc Nation, Chief