

Cherokee Heritage

There are many famous actors, scientists, athletes and politicians who are Cherokee citizens. Here are just a few examples of famous Cherokees.

Will Rogers

Born in Oologah, Indian Territory in 1879, William Penn Adair Rogers was one of America's most beloved humorists. Will's parents were both Cherokee citizens and alumni of the Cherokee Male and Female Seminaries. They also ran a successful ranch. While growing up, Will learned roping and riding skills and turned them into an art form. Young Will was not interested in school, and his father's wealth allowed him to travel extensively around the world. He eventually landed work performing his roping tricks as the "Cherokee Kid" with various Wild West shows and circuses. Will became a hit with audiences, largely due to the humorous monologue he delivered during each performance. Will eventually garnered worldwide fame by writing two books and a weekly column that became syndicated in newspapers, and starring in 71 films. On August 15, 1935, Will Rogers and Wiley Post, a Lockheed Aircraft test pilot, were killed when their plane crashed while they were touring Alaska. The sudden death of Oklahoma's beloved native son shocked and saddened the entire nation. Will's wife, Betty, buried him in Los Angeles, California. In 1944, Betty had his body moved to the Will Rogers Memorial Museum in Claremore, Oklahoma. Will Rogers' birthplace ranch in Oologah is open for visitors.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Mary Golda Ross

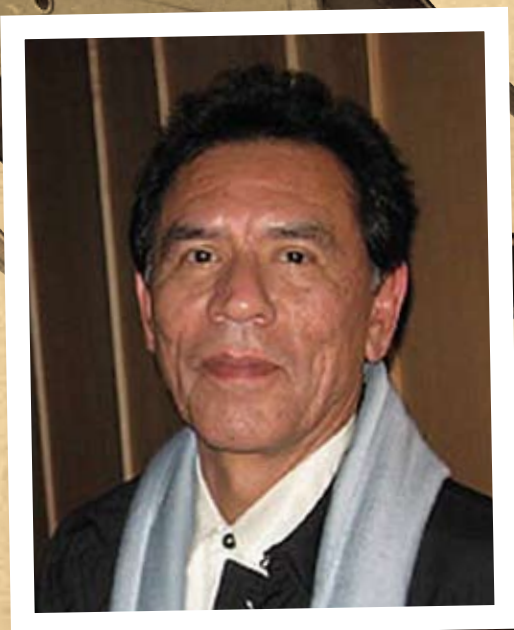
Mary Golda Ross made great strides in the field of engineering. She was the first female engineer hired by aeronautical giant Lockheed Aircraft. Over her long career, she worked in aerospace research, space technology and missile defense; developed military planes; and planned manned trips to Venus, Mars, and the outer planets. Her research was instrumental in the development of the Agena rocket, the first successfully launched space vehicle and forerunner of the Apollo program. After her retirement, she traveled the country encouraging young women and American Indians to pursue careers in engineering and math. She passed away in April 2008.



Courtesy of Cherokee Nation

Wes Studi

Native Oklahoman, Vietnam veteran, sculptor, actor, musician, author, activist: each of these words describes Wes Studi. Within a few years of his arrival in Hollywood, Studi caught the attention of the public in the movie *Dances with Wolves*. In 1992, his powerful performance as Magua in *Last of the Mohicans* established him as one of the most compelling actors in the business. Studi has since appeared in more than 50 film and television productions. Born in Nofire Hollow, Oklahoma, Studi spoke only his native Cherokee language until beginning school at the age of 5.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Newspapers for this educational program provided by:

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When devising his alphabet, Sequoyah first attempted to make a symbol for each word in the language, but he quickly realized the number of symbols was becoming too large. This caused him to become more selective, so he began listening more intently to the individual sounds that made up Cherokee words. After a long study, he realized that there were 85 individual syllables, which were used to make up the many words of the Cherokee language. He was then able to limit the symbols to a much smaller number. The symbols could be used in combinations to form any word. His first student was his brother-in-law, Michael Waters, and the first to read and write with the invention was his daughter, A-Yo-Ka.



Did you know Cherokees didn't initially believe Sequoyah had devised a written language?

Although the system was foolproof and easy to learn, Sequoyah and his daughter were charged with witchcraft and brought before their town chief for trial. Because of a Cherokee law enacted in 1811, it was mandated to have a civil trial before an execution was allowed to take place. Lowery brought in a group of warriors to judge what was termed a "sorcery trial." To determine if Sequoyah truly had devised a written form of the Cherokee language, the warriors separated

Sequoyah and his daughter. They had them send messages between each other until the warriors were finally convinced that the symbols on paper actually represented talking.

At the end of the trial, the warriors asked Sequoyah to teach them this new skill. Within a week, all were able to read and write their own language. The warriors were historically known as a fierce group of Cherokees and with their protection and patronage, literacy spread quickly throughout the Cherokee Nation.

Sequoyah's Cherokee Syllabary

D _a	R _e	T _i	Ꭰ _o	Ꭱ _u	i _v
S _{ga} Ꭰ _{ka}	F _{ge}	Y _{gi}	A _{go}	J _{gu}	E _{gv}
V _{ha}	P _{he}	Ꭰ _{hi}	F _{ho}	Ꭲ _{hu}	Ꭳ _{hv}
W _{la}	Ꭳ _{le}	F _{li}	G _{lo}	M _{lu}	Ꭴ _{lv}
Ꭶ _{ma}	Ꭰ _{me}	H _{mi}	Ꭰ _{mo}	Y _{mu}	
Ꭰ _{na} Ꭰ _{hna}	Ꭰ _{ne}	h _{ni}	Z _{no}	Ꭰ _{nu}	Ꭱ _{nv}
T _{qua}	Ꭰ _{que}	P _{qui}	V _{quo}	Ꭰ _{quu}	E _{quv}
U _{sa} Ꭰ _s	Ꭰ _{se}	b _{si}	F _{so}	Ꭲ _{su}	R _{sv}
L _{da} W _{ta}	S _{de} Ꭲ _{te}	J _{di} J _{ti}	V _{do}	S _{du}	P _{dv}
Ꭰ _{dl} Ꭰ _l Ꭰ _{tl}	L _{tle}	C _{tli}	Ꭲ _{do}	P _{tlu}	F _{tlv}
G _t Ꭰ _{sa}	V _{tse}	Ꭲ _t Ꭰ _{tsi}	K _{tso}	J _{tsu}	C _{tsv}
C _{wa}	Ꭰ _{we}	Ꭰ _{wi}	Ꭰ _{wo}	Ꭰ _{wu}	Ꭰ _{wv}
Ꭰ _{ya}	Ꭲ _{ye}	Ꭰ _{yi}	f _{yo}	G _{yu}	B _{yv}

Vowel Sounds

a, as a in father, or short as a in rival
e, as a in hate, or short as e in met
i, as i in pique, or short as i in pit
o, as o in note, approaching aw in law
u, as oo in fool, or short as u in pull
v as u in but, nasalized.

Consonant Sounds

g nearly as in English, but approaching to k.
d nearly as in English but approaching to t.
h k l m n q s t w y as in English.
Syllables beginning with g except S (ga)
have sometimes the power of k.
A (go), S (du), P (dv) are sometimes
sounded to, tu, tv and syllables written with tl
except C (tla) sometimes vary to dl.



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Did you know you can send text messages in Cherokee?

In 2003, Apple began supporting the Cherokee language by including a font and keyboard in the company's computer operating system, and in 2010 Apple began supporting the Cherokee syllabary. Now, all iPhones, iPads, and iPod Touches in the world include our language on them, straight out of the box.

Did you know there's a school dedicated to preserving the Cherokee language?

The Cherokee Language Immersion School promotes the revitalization of the Cherokee language by teach it to Cherokee children. More than 100 students learn their everyday-school lessons entirely in Cherokee.