

VOTE JUANITA JESSEPE FOR TRIBAL COUNCIL

Greetings! Fellow Nishnabek – I'm throwing my moccasins into the ring as a contender for the position of Tribal Council Member #3.

My Potawatomi name is Wah-ke-she' and my clan is Turtle. I was told, the Turtle was given the gift of the "voice of reason" when dealing with the enemies of the People. Because of its hard shell it can withstand weapons hurled at it by the enemy. Beneath its hard shell is a soft heart that continues to beat strong...long after it's killed.

I am not a Masters level candidate, I'm still pursuing my higher education degree. So, I cannot cite a list of academic accomplishments to bring to the council table. In 1993 to 1995 I was appointed to the Kansas Advisory Committee of the United States Civil Rights Commission. I provided testimony to the committee citing the Jackson County Sheriff's Department for harassing our tribal members. Since then, the tribe entered into a Cross-Deputization Agreement giving our jurisdictional authority over to State law enforcement agencies allowing them to troll our reservation anytime. We have our own Tribal Police Department now, so there is no valid reason to be held under State jurisdiction.

From 1994 to 1998 I served as the Tribal Secretary. It was during the administration that the Tribal Council fought hard against the State of Kansas to open a casino on our reservation. The final Gaming Compact is still binding and has no ending date and will remain in full force and effect – forever – so long as it is never re-opened! To do so, would open a "can of worms" giving the State a strong negotiating weapon to tax the tribe from our casino profits. I discourage any efforts to open the Compact. It would prove deadly to the Tribe's biggest economic engine. It was also during this administration that we negotiated for our own license tags. The State of Kansas isn't seen anywhere on our tags. Other tribes have included their respective states on their license tags. We refused to give away any of our Sovereignty. During my term I also intervened in State courts on behalf of our Potawatomi children and was able to save some of our children from removal. Currently, I serve as the Chairperson of the Social Services Board established by the voters from the General Council floor, and given the task to oversee the social services departments. I am self-employed as a Lay Advocate and was admitted to practice in Potawatomi District Court in 2003. Usually I am the person of last resort for people are seeking help I the legal system. There is much work to be done for better representation in both Tribal and State Courts. It's vitally important for Indian Preference laws to be upheld. Many tribal members are overlooked for jobs simply because a non-Indian may have more credentials than the qualified Indian who's already met the criteria. Which brings up the "At-Will" clause borrowed from big corporations to get rid of CEO's usually during a corporate takeover or a change in management. The Tribe adopted this corporate practice to terminate tribal employees at the whim of the Tribal Council and upper management. I do not support the "At-Will" clause. It promotes cronyism, favoritism and nepotism. The enrollment/blood quantum is an ongoing issue. Some want to drop blood quantum to 1/16, and some want to leave it as is. But what defines a "real" Potawatomi? Is it someone who was given their Indian name and clan at the sacred Fire Place? Or, is it someone with watered down blood quantum thereby creating a "Paper Potawatomi" only wanting per capita payments? These are just a few of the many problems we are faced with. Our ancestors fought hard for us to live, worship and dies as Nishnabek. So,

it's important to elect people who will stand up for our language, culture and traditions. I will continue to fight for our sovereignty and for fair tribal practices..whether I win or lose in this election.

And, I pray that the heart and spirit of our ancestors will continue to beat strong for our People.

I'gwien