



Choctaw Storyteller Tim Tingle Honored

by STACY HUTTO

Choctaw storyteller Tim Tingle will be honored with the Tulsa Library Trust's "Festival of Words Award" on March 4, at Hardesty Regional Library's Connor's Cove, located at 8316 E. 93rd St.

The award will be presented at 10:30 a.m. The award presentation will be followed by a book signing and a day of educational American Indian family events from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The award, presented every other year, consists of a honorarium and an engraved crystal.

Previous winners include: 2001, Joy Harjo, Muscogee Creek; 2003, Vine DeLoria Jr., Standing Rock Sioux; 2005, Leslie Marmon-Silko, Laguna Pueblo; 2007, Carter Revard, Osage; 2011, LeAnne Howe, Choctaw Nation; 2013, Sterlin Harjo, Seminole/Muscogee Creek; and 2015, Joseph Bruchac, Abenaki.

Tingle is a storyteller and award-winning author of books for children, teens, and adults. He earned his master's degree at the University of Oklahoma with a focus on American Indian studies. Since the early 1990s, Tingle has spent hundreds of hours interviewing Choctaw tribal elders throughout the South in an effort to create a personal and historical narrative.

In 2005, he was selected as the featured author for Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma, for his book, "Walking the Choctaw Road." This book features 12 stories with a mix of historical accounts, traditional lore, and tales from everyday life. Tingle collected the stories through interviews with Choctaw tribal elders. Told in chronological order, the stories range from the days when most Choctaws were living in Mississippi to the Trail of Tears, including difficulties in modern times.

"My dad and his brothers and sisters told story after story of our family surviving the Trail of Tears," recalled Tingle.

"John Carnes, my great-great-grandfather was 10-years-old when his town was burned to the ground and the journey began. It seemed every weekend we children were treated to various versions of John's story," Tingle continued.

His first children's book, "Crossing Bok Chitto," earned more than 20 state and national awards, including Best Children's Book from the American Library Association. It also was named an Editor's Choice by the New York Times Books Review.

Tingle was a featured author and speaker at the 2014 National Book Festival in Washington, D.C., based on the critical acclaim for "How I Became a Ghost," which won the 2014 American Indian Library Association Youth Literature Award.

He recounts his tribe's removal from the only land its people have ever known and how their journey to Oklahoma led him to become a ghost—one with the ability to help those he left behind. Isaac leads a remarkable group of Choctaw comrades consisting of a tough-minded teenage girl, a shape-shifting panther, a lovable 5-year-old ghost who only wants her mom and dad to be happy, and Isaac's talking dog, Jumper. The next book in the series, "When a Ghost Talks, Listen," is scheduled to be released in 2017.

Focusing on United States Army General and Choctaw Chief Pushmataha, the reader is transported to Washington, D.C., 1824, to explore the circumstances surrounding Pushmataha's mysterious death.

Tingle's latest novel, "House of Purple Cedar," won the 2016 American Indian Youth Literature Award. Set in the 1890s in Spiro, it describes challenges facing Choctaws and incoming white settlers.

Every Labor Day, Tingle performs a Choctaw story before the Chief's State of the Nation address, a gathering that attracts tribal members and friends.

In June of 2011, Tingle spoke at the Library of Congress and presented his first performance at the Kennedy Center, delivering a keynote address at the National Education Association's Annual Assembly.

In June of 2016, Tingle performed stories in Washington, D.C., at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian as a part of the Choctaw Nation Arts & Music Festival.

One of the stories Tingle told during the two-day festival was "How the Rabbit Lost Its Tail." Children from the audience became a part of the festival when they helped Tingle reenact the story.

Please visit <http://guides.tulsalibrary.org/airc/> for a list of family events and times during the American Indian Festival of Words. For more information on library programming, call the AskUs Hotline at (918) 549-7323.



by Deidre Elrod

With help from children in the audience Tim Tingle tells the story of "How the Rabbit Lost Its Tail," during the Choctaw Nation Arts & Music Festival in Washington, D.C., in June of 2016.

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