



News Release

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Deere named Grand Marshal of Tulsa's 2022 MLK Parade

TULSA, Jan. 13, 2022 – Joe Deere, the Cherokee Nation Councilor for District 13, which includes Tulsa, Catoosa and Owasso, has been named Grand Marshal of the 43rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Parade. He will be wearing purple to signify bipartisanship, creating community, and building bridges. Deere will be joined by his wife of 25 years, Bobi Hill Deere.

The parade takes place Monday, January 17, at 11 a.m., beginning at the corner of N. Detroit Ave. and John Hope Franklin Blvd and meanders through historic Greenwood Avenue to Archer, ending near ONEOK Field. Thousands of people are expected to attend the parade featuring 160 themed floats, marching bands, dancers and corporate sponsors. Masks are encouraged given the high rates of Covid-19 in Tulsa and surrounding communities.

“We are excited to have Mr. Deere as our Grand Marshal, as he will be the first tribal representative we’ve had serving in this capacity,” said Pleas Thompson, president of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Society. “Our Native American brothers and sisters have done much to build bridges in our community, and we acknowledge their partnership in embracing Dr. King’s legacy both in thought and in action.”

Mr. Deere is a proud graduate of Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa and is one of three generations of Hornets in his family. He is a member of the Class of 1988, and his wife is a proud Hornet (Class of 1990).

He believes that in order to help safeguard and strengthen the sovereignty of the Cherokee Nation within its reservation and beyond, partnerships that create communication and cooperation must be formed with all who live on the Cherokee Reservation, Native and non-Native alike.

In an effort to embody this year’s theme of *“Hope and Action: The Fierce Urgency of Now,”* Joe’s vision for his district is creating community, which he has diligently worked on by fighting for the citizenship rights of Freedmen, creating three new community groups, building a new clinic and adding three food distribution sites within his district’s boundaries. Mr. Deere was recently named one of *Tulsa World’s* “People to Watch 2021.”

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Within his first two years on the Cherokee Council, Joe was appointed a commissioner to the Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission. He was also appointed to the board of the Tulsa Air and Space Museum and to Catoosa Public Schools' Board of Education. He also serve on the boards of Food on the Move, the Historic Black Towns and Settlements Alliance, and the Owasso Family YMCA. Joe attends St. Pius X Catholic Church in Tulsa and is an active member of the local Knights of Columbus Council. He uses his time with the Knights to volunteer at a high level for causes such as the Special Olympics, Knights for Autism, and the GoLife Campaign. As the District Deputy of the Knights of Columbus, Joe is proud of his implemented integration policy within the Catholic brotherhood to create community between all cultures.

About the MLK Jr. Commemoration Society

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Society, Inc. is a Tulsa, Oklahoma-based 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization focused on honoring and preserving the works and ideals that Dr. King practiced. Tax-deductible donations to the MLK Scholarship Fund or the Celebration may be made without participating in the parade. Any amount is sincerely appreciated. Checks should be made out to "MLK Commemoration Society" and mailed to: P.O. Box 14025; Tulsa, OK 74159-1025.

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