



Betty Lucille Hunkapillar

August 27, 1929 - February 26, 2026

Betty Lucille Hunkapillar, a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, passed away on February 26, 2026, at the age of 96, in Seguin, Texas. Born on August 27, 1929, in Haworth, Oklahoma, Betty lived a life of intellectual growth, generosity, and an enduring devotion to her heritage, loved ones, and community. Betty grew up as a native Choctaw speaker, who attended the Wheelock Academy boarding school for Choctaw girls and young women. Over the years, she developed a deep connection to her language and culture that would shape the course of her life.

Betty earned degrees in Education and in Counseling from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. She subsequently served as a counselor to the University's Choctaw and Indigenous Native American Indian student body and was the highly successful proposal writer for the University's Bilingual Education Program. She was the University's representative and ambassador to the newly constituted North American Indian Women's Association for education and inter-tribal cooperative services.

Betty subsequently moved to the Kiamichi Valley to share her love of teaching and giving as an educator of elementary students in the Buffalo Valley School District, who benefited from her sharp mind and patient guidance. She chose to influence those students who were in their most inquisitive and receptive ages.

Perhaps her most lasting contribution was the co-authoring of the definitive primer for the Choctaw language, a work that preserved and honored the

linguistic traditions of her people for future generations. Her dedication to the Choctaw tribe was a cornerstone of her identity, and she carried that pride with her throughout her life.

Betty was a woman of many gifts. Those who knew her treasured her quick wit, her kindness, and her generous spirit. She was always ready to lend a hand or share a warm word. She found joy in baking her beloved fried pies, a tradition that brought sweet comfort to everyone fortunate enough to taste them. She cherished her shopping trips and nail spa days with her girlfriends, occasions filled with laughter and lasting friendships. As a devout Christian, Betty drew strength and peace from her study of the Bible, a practice she held dear throughout her years.

Betty was a proud mother to her son, US Army (retired) Lieutenant Colonel Michael Spencer, a decorated Army veteran whose service she honored deeply.

She was preceded in death by her husbands, Harold Spencer (1980) and Carl Hunkapillar (2004), parents Sibbie Milam and Alex McClure, and sisters Florence Spaulding, Isabel Clampet, Pauline Foye, and Geraldine Yearly.

She is survived by her son, Michael Spencer of Seguin, Texas, her sister, Virginia Dodson of Guthrie, Oklahoma, as well as her granddaughters Kelly Spencer of Coventry, Rhode Island, and Sirena Spencer of Jenks, Oklahoma, both of whom held special places in her heart. She also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, and cherished friends.

Betty Hunkapillar's legacy of wisdom, warmth, and cultural preservation will continue to touch lives for generations to come.

A memorial service will be held on June 18, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. in the New Talihina Cemetery in Talihina, Oklahoma. Family and friends are welcome to gather in celebration of a life beautifully and fully lived.

Upcoming Events

Memorial Service

JUN 18. 11:00 AM.

New Talihina Cemetery