



**CHEROKEE COUNCIL HOUSE  
CHEROKEE, NORTH CAROLINA**

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ (2026)**

***Resolution to Name Dr. Lisa Lefler, Ph D, as an Honorary Member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians***

10 **WHEREAS**, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has a tradition of formally recognizing  
11 individuals who are not enrolled members but have contributed time and effort to the Tribe  
12 and its members; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the designation of Honorary Member is the highest recognition given by the  
14 Tribe, intended as a mark of appreciation without legal or financial benefits; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Lisa Lefler has dedicated over two decades to serving the Cherokee  
16 community, advancing health and wellness in collaboration with the PHHS Division,  
17 Cherokee Indian Hospital, WCU Cherokee Center, the Cherokee Studies Program, and the  
18 Institutional Review Board (IRB), as well as being a member of the Cultural IRB (CIRB) since  
19 1998. Her research on historical grief and trauma has positively influenced many EBCI  
20 members through initiatives such as the Cherokee Choices Program and, subsequently,  
21 the Culturally Based Native Health Certificate Program. Additionally, she has served as an  
22 adjunct professor and contract worker, contributing to the development of these significant  
23 programs for our community.

24 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Lisa Lefler has worked as an educator at Oklahoma University for five years  
25 and conducted research on American Indian Fatherhood through the American Indian  
26 Institute on campus. She has provided information on spirituality and wellness to various  
27 indigenous communities. Dr. Lefler is currently affiliated with the College of Health &  
28 Human Services and has served as the Director for the Center for Native Health, a position  
29 she held for approximately thirteen years. She has hosted and attended many workshops,  
30 lectures, and staff training courses focused on historical topics, grief, trauma, and health-  
31 related issues. Additionally, she contributed to the development of the MedCat Program,

32 which aims to introduce young Cherokee students to careers in health and wellness and  
33 encourage them to join the health workforce. Dr. Lefler is a professor of Anthropology and  
34 researcher, having worked with various tribes throughout her career, and has resided in the  
35 local region of Dillsboro for over 25 years.

36 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Lefler partners with various organizations to benefit the Cherokee  
37 community through indigenous education and storytelling. For 15 years, she has  
38 coordinated the Rooted in the Mountain Symposium and Annual Public Lecture in Native  
39 Health at WCU, which engages EBCI members in health-related learning. She has taught  
40 multiple subjects including Medical Anthropology, Psychological Anthropology, Applied  
41 Research Methods, Appalachian Studies, Cherokee History & Culture, and Native  
42 American Studies to Cherokee and WCU audiences. Dr. Lefler is currently a full professor in  
43 the College of Health and Human Sciences at Western Carolina University and continues  
44 to work within the community daily.

45 **WHEREAS** Lisa's commitment to teaching and learning in health fields is matched by her  
46 warmth and support for our community. Through years of shared experiences, she has  
47 been a valued friend and contributor, always showing kindness despite personal  
48 challenges. Today, we are proud to recognize Lisa as an Honorary member of the Eastern  
49 Band of Cherokee Indians for her outstanding academic and community contributions.

50 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of  
51 Cherokee Indians, assembled in council with a quorum present, that in recognition of her  
52 enduring friendship and substantial contributions to the Cherokee people, Dr. Lisa Lefler,  
53 Ph.D., is hereby designated an Honorary Member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

54 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that any prior resolutions inconsistent with this resolution are  
55 rescinded, and this resolution shall take effect upon ratification by the Principal Chief.

56 **Supporters:**

57 • Tommy Cabe	Sky Sampson
58 • Sarah Thompson	Tom Belt
59 • Frieda Saylor	Roseanna Belt
60 • Angelina Jumper	Brett Riggs
61 • Sheena Lambert	Onita Bush
62 • Tina Saunooke	Vicky Bradley
63 • Patty Grant	Tyson Sampson
64 • Louise Goings	Casey Cooper
65 • Robin Bailey-Callahan	Sonya Wachacha
66 • Driver Blythe	Paxton Myers

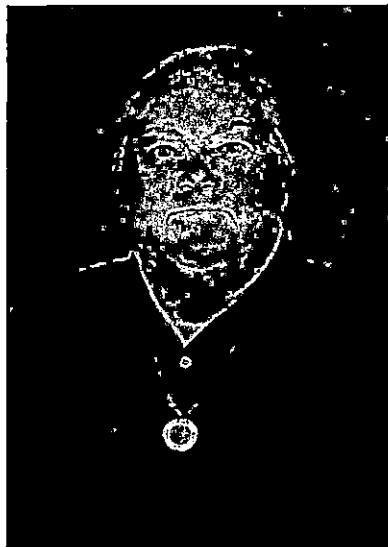
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68 **Submitted by:**

69 • Sky Sampson, Secretary of CERS Division and former WCU Director of the Cherokee  
70 Center.

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74 Ph.D., University of Tennessee 1996; Vstg. Assoc. Prof. Anthropology; Director,  
75 Culturally Based Native Health Program; Research Assoc. at Wake Forest University,  
76 Dept. of Anthropology

77 Education:

78 • Ph D, University of Tennessee Knoxville  
79 • MA, Western Carolina University  
80 • BA, Appalachian State University

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82 Links to publications and articles of Lisa's work

83 • [Native Health: Making Important Connections to History, Language, and the Land](#)  
84 [Published in North Carolina Medical Journal](#)

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