

Bozho,

My Potawatomi given name is “Wawiatnokwe”, and my English-given name is Krista Catron. I am an enrolled member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and I also represent Kickapoo ancestry. My color is blue and I am of the Fish clan. I am one of many proud grandchildren of Ronald and LaVeda Wahweotten and Maxine and Benny Catron. My parents are Tina Wahweotten and Darold Catron. I also have three sisters; Racheal Deo, Robin Deo, and Abby Boeckman. I do not have children but I am a proud auntie to five beautiful nieces and nephews that I consider my own.

Beginning in 2014, I served the Nation as a PBPN Peacemaker and also worked as a Foster Care Case Manager. In the Spring of 2019, I graduated from Washington University’s Brown School of Social Work and Public Health in St. Louis with a Masters of Social Work (MSW) graduate degree, concentration in American Indian and Alaskan Native Studies and specialized in Sexual Health and Education. Since then, I have returned home and am currently serving as the Assistant Social Service Administrator for the PBPN Social Service Department. In this capacity, I have overseen 7 programs, 16 budgets, 22 grants, and nearly 30 staff. I have the ability and skills to effectively manage a variety of projects, and I believe that these skills are transferable to the position of Tribal Council Member #3.

I come from a strong line of leaders. I have only ever witnessed persistence and resiliency in the form of strong Indigenous people, but especially the women in my life. But as I’ve written this, I am faced with the impending question of “what is leadership?” A few things may come to mind as one thinks of leadership; accountability, effective communication, integrity, and commitment. While these are all very important traits of a leader, I believe it is very important and necessary to understand that there is no one “right” definition for leadership. Nor, is there one “blanket” approach to leading people, especially Indigenous people. Why? Although we live in a binary world that forces us to “pick and choose” or place definitions and meanings to things, we are also a multidimensional and tenacious group of people that cannot be defined by one standard. Most times a linear standard that is foreign to the relational ways of living within tribal cultures.

As Angela Bunner, the Dean of Academic Affairs for College of the Muscogee Nation states, “*there are as many definitions for leadership as there are Indigenous nations.*” For me, leadership is rooted in and based on communities’ need to address challenges and take on bold new ventures that sustain our culture, language, and beliefs, while propelling us forward to an innovative and sustainable future for generations to come, in honor of generations before us. I am guided by a purpose to serve others and address and dismantle existing and potential barriers our community faces.

My leadership approach requires me to be aware of my own strengths and vulnerabilities and how these are interrelated, while maintaining an ever-evolving awareness of the community to which I belong. My personal vision for our community is to sustain Potawatomi culture, address health and wellness concerns, expand education outreach and programs for social well-being, promote alternative economic ventures that supplement or supersede our gaming revenue, and environmental sustainability and stewardship. As the needs of our community shifts to adjust to the world at large, so should our vision and ventures that we take on as the Nation. I appreciate any and all support during this time. Do not hesitate to

contact me at kristaforcouncil@gmail.com for any questions, comments, or concerns. I take your insight and perspective seriously and I want to be your voice.

Chi Migwett Igwien,

Krista Catron