

As 2009 draws to an end, many of us will wave it a welcome goodbye! Economic downturn, lost jobs, homes lost or devalued, shrinking dollars, investment and retirement funds.

All of us have been affected by the recession in one way or another; and if you or a loved one is still serving overseas, it almost seems inappropriate to complain about the economy! What sacrifice and true servitude to our country and at the ultimate cost when they do not return.

This past year, I also lost my hero, my father, and placed my aging mother in an assisted living facility. After also losing my brother David the previous summer to cancer, sometimes it is easy for me to walk around with a heavy heart, and one that is very discouraged and worries about tomorrow. It is those times that I make myself stop and re-focus on the blessings in my life. I remind myself that I must always try to live in the present. Not dwell on the past or future but live in today.

Today, I have much to be thankful for; I have three healthy children, a nice roof over my head, food in the pantry and the best job I could ever hope for. Elected by you and serving on the Chickasaw Legislature is something for which I am very thankful.

Our tribe remains strong and economically viable due to the diligence and collaboration of many dedicated people. My part in this is to make sure our efforts reach out to every Chickasaw in providing the best opportunities and support to reach their goals in life, whatever they may be.

You are important to your tribe! It is for your benefit that we exist as a sovereign nation. So as we close out a tumultuous year as citizens of the United States, remember that you are also a citizen of the unconquered and unconquerable Chickasaw Nation!

In addition, I wish you many blessings of the day wherever you are.