

Chickasaw

Student Curricula



Carl Albert and the Chickasaw Nation

ELEMENTARY

Essential Questions:

- Who was Carl Albert, and what were his contributions to Oklahoma and the Chickasaw Nation?
- How did Carl Albert fight for equality of all people?
- What is a biography, and how are biographies important to the study of history?



Chickasaw Nation Governor Overton James and Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Carl Albert. Photo courtesy of the *Chickasaw Nation Collection*.

Learning Goals/Objectives:

- To examine the characteristics of Carl Albert by utilizing biographies.
- To recognize the significant contributions Carl Albert made to the state of Oklahoma and the Chickasaw Nation.
- To explain the important role an elected leader has to ensure equality for all citizens.
- To define civic virtue and responsibilities of citizens at local, state and tribal levels.

Background:

Carl Albert was an American lawyer and politician who served as the 46th Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and as a Democratic congressman from Oklahoma for 30 years. Carl Albert was born in McAlester and raised in Bug Tussle, Oklahoma, a small town north of McAlester. He graduated from McAlester High School in 1927 then attended the University of Oklahoma, where he majored in political science. He graduated from college in 1931 as the top male student then studied at the University of Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship. In 1935, he opened a law practice in Oklahoma City, and he worked as a lawyer until 1941 when he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army Air Force.

In 1946, he left the Army and was soon elected to Congress. Throughout his time in Congress, he worked on issues including Social Security and Medicare. During this time, he also worked in tandem with Chickasaw grassroots leaders to address self-determination and access to quality health care, among other pertinent issues. These grassroots leaders included many Chickasaw activists, ministers and citizens, including Overton James, Jesse and Vinnie May Humes, Jonas Imotichey, Abijah Colbert and Mary Stone McClendon (*Ataloo*), who worked to gain cooperation from the federal government. In 1968, the efforts of the grassroots leaders and Albert were heard, and the Indian Health Service (IHS) opened the first health care facility within the Chickasaw Nation called the Chickasaw Nation Tishomingo Health Clinic, located in Tishomingo, Oklahoma. While the newly opened clinic in Tishomingo was successful, the need for health services exceeded the clinic's capabilities. This concern was identified, and Albert, Governor James and other members of the grassroots leaders worked tirelessly to address it.

In 1971, when House Speaker John McCormack retired, Carl Albert was elected as Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. Following Albert's retirement as speaker in January 1977, he returned to Oklahoma and continued advocacy work with the Chickasaw Nation. In 1980, the Carl Albert Indian Health Facility opened in Ada, Oklahoma. This health facility quickly enhanced the overall quality of life of Chickasaws and other First Americans. Carl Albert remains the highest ranking official of any Oklahoman within Congress in American history. The cooperation and support Albert gave to the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Country, the state of Oklahoma and to the United States, is a demonstration of his civic virtue and character. Carl Albert died at the age of 91 Feb. 4, 2000.

Materials/Resources:

Biography of Carl Albert

Student Graphic Organizer

Examples of biographies

Photograph of Carl Albert

Web links: Chickasaw.net and Chickasaw.tv

Vocabulary:

Autobiography	Biography	Carl Albert	Chickasaw
Civic virtue	Civil Rights Act	Congressman	Graphic organizer
Legacy	McAlester	Segregation	Self-determination
Sovereignty	United States		
	Speaker of the		
	House of		
	Representatives		

Lesson Plan

Engage:

Engage students by displaying biographies of famous Americans or Oklahomans. It is preferable to have the books in the classroom, but it would also be effective to display biography titles on an interactive board.

Provide discussion questions to build a foundation for the lesson on the life of Carl Albert.

- What is a biography?
- What are some of the things that you would expect to find in someone's life story?
- Most people read biographies because they want to learn more about someone's life. Name someone you would like to learn more about.
- Sometimes biographies are written about a person who has done something remarkable. Sometimes biographies are written about people from various careers or walks of life, such as musicians, actors, athletes, etc. Have any of you ever read a biography? If so, who was it about?
- If someone wrote a biography about your life, what would you like for the title to be?

Explore:

Activity 1: Biography Scavenger Hunt

Tell students they are going to participate in a scavenger hunt, and they will be looking around the room for information from different parts of a biography. Distribute the graphic organizer and ensure students understand the graphic organizer template and the specific information for which they will be searching.

Introduce Carl Albert to the students by displaying a picture of Carl Albert or a copy of Carl Albert's biography, *Little Giant: The Life and Times of Speaker Carl Albert*. Stress the importance of Carl Albert's legacy to the people of Oklahoma and the Chickasaw Nation. Help students recognize Carl Albert's importance by providing the names of important buildings, etc., that now bear Albert's name: Carl Albert High School in Midwest City, Carl Albert State College in Poteau, the Carl Albert Federal Building in McAlester and the Carl Albert Service Center building in Ada, Oklahoma.

Prior to the scavenger hunt, create an area of the classroom for each of the following parts of Carl Albert’s biography: Early Life, Education, Political Career, Carl Albert and the state of Oklahoma, Carl Albert and the Chickasaw Nation and the Legacy of Carl Albert. Place the reading passage (source) on tables that have been designated for each particular part of the biography. Provide students with information about how to conduct the scavenger hunt by letting students know that they will complete the graphic organizer as they move from station to station.

Explain:

After the students are finished with the graphic organizer, conduct a class discussion.

There was a lot of information about Carl Albert. What was our main goal when reading his biography? Our goal was to find his contributions to the state of Oklahoma and the Chickasaw Nation. What are some of the things he did or stood up for to improve the lives of the citizens of the state of Oklahoma and the Chickasaw Nation? (Student Discussion)

Elaborate:

Activity 2: Depth of Knowledge Questioning

For activity 2, the depth of knowledge questioning, organize students into small groups and give each group a complete copy of the reading passage and a list of discussion questions. Each group will designate a secretary/spokesperson who will take notes on the students’ responses to the following questions.

- What influenced Carl Albert to fight for equality for all people?
- What things did Carl Albert do throughout his life that helped him become a leader?
- What are some examples of leadership Carl Albert demonstrated throughout his life that we can apply to our own lives?
- Carl Albert was elected to his political position. What characteristics did Carl Albert possess that helped him to be elected by voters?
- Civic virtue is when a citizen acts on what they believe is the best interest of their community. Find three or more examples of civic virtue in Carl Albert’s life.

As students work through the reading passage, they will highlight parts of the passage that help them determine their answers, circle vocabulary words and underline examples of civic virtue at the local, state and tribal levels. Then ask each group to report back to the larger group.

Activity 3: Autobiography

For activity 3, talk to students about the difference between a biography and an autobiography and should remind students that both contain much of the same information. Assign students to write short autobiographies about their own lives that include similar information found on the

graphic organizer template. To further extend the activity, students could be asked to publish their autobiographies by developing a final copy of their life stories that would include photographs and other documents.

Evaluate:

Pass out the included Exit Ticket to assess each student's ability to define civic virtue. The teacher may also use students' completed graphic organizers to assess whether or not students were able to efficiently research Carl Albert using his biography.

Alternatively, teachers may choose to administer formative assessments such as "Think, Pair, Share," "Three-Way Summaries" or "Strategic Questioning." Summative assessments might also be developed to close the lesson and to demonstrate student understanding.

ALIGNMENT TO OKLAHOMA ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE 3 CONTENT STANDARDS

3.1.5 Define the concept of civic virtue and responsibilities of citizens at the local, state and tribal levels.

3.3.12 Examine notable historic and present-day Oklahomans utilizing biographies and information texts such as Jim Thorpe, Sequoyah, Will Rogers, Wiley Post, Mickey Mantle, Shannon Lucid, Bill Pickett, Clara Luper and Maria Tallchief.

***3.1.4** Describe relationships between people and events of the past, including those commemorated on national, state and community holidays.

Oklahoma Academic Standards serve as expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of the school year. Objectives indicated with an asterisk support students' background knowledge and/or assists with preloading knowledge.

SOCIAL STUDIES PRACTICES

1.A.2-3.1 Identify civic virtues and democratic principles such as equality, fairness and respect for legitimate authority.

1.A.2-3.2 Describe and offer examples of how people have improved their communities in the past and present.

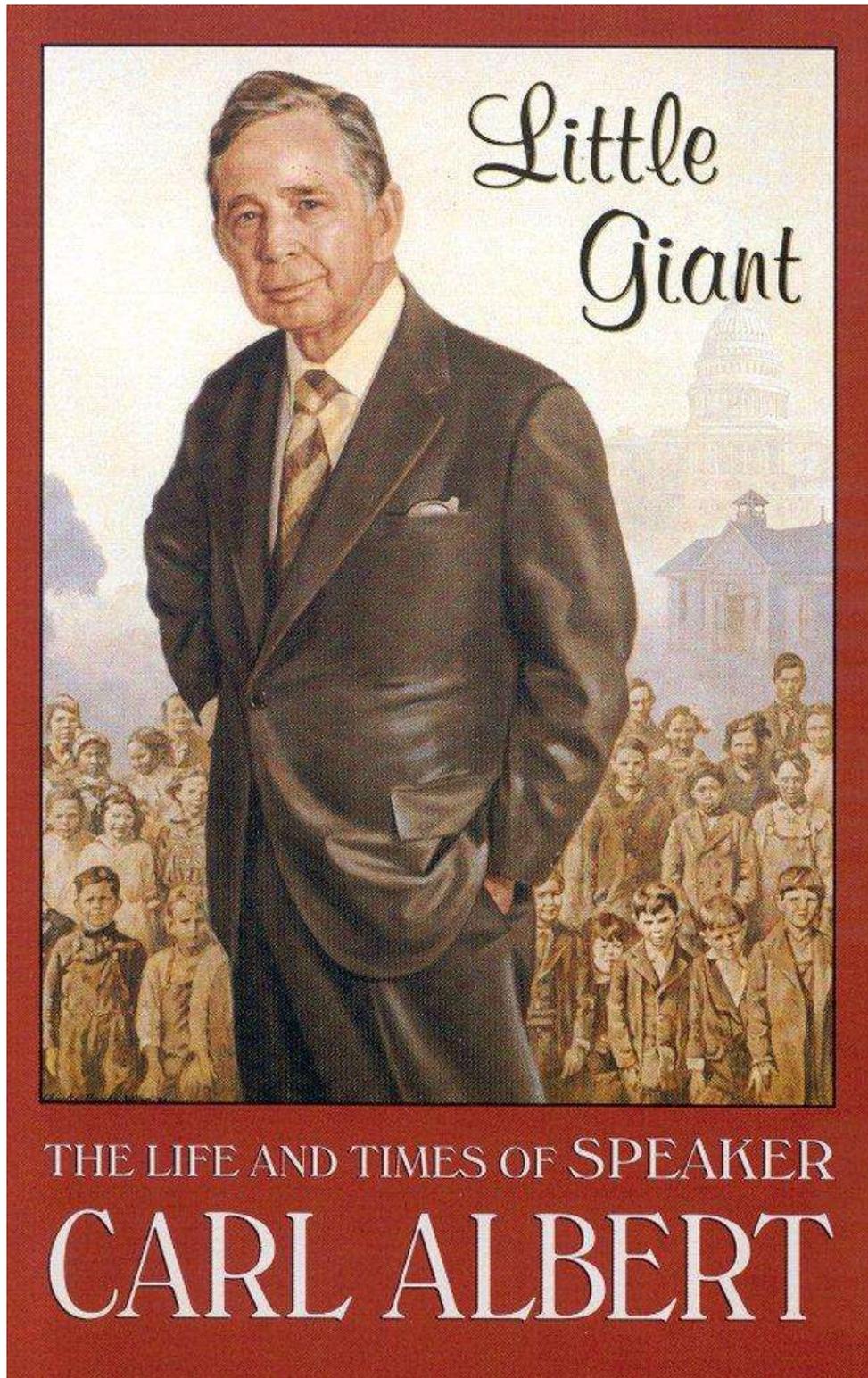
1.B.2-3.2 Explain why all informed citizens should participate in their community.

1.C.2-3.1 Explain how people can work together to make decisions in their community and state.

4.A.2-3.3 Acquire new academic vocabulary; relate new words to prior knowledge and apply vocabulary in social studies.

4.B.2-3.2 Locate facts (e.g., who, what, where, when, why and how) to demonstrate an understanding of key details in a text.

Biography of Carl Albert



Early Life

Carl Bert Albert was born May 10, 1908, in McAlester, Oklahoma. Nicknamed the “Little Giant from Little Dixie” because of his height (5 feet, 4 inches), he was able to accomplish many things in his lifetime. Albert was born less than one year after Oklahoma became a state. His hometown of McAlester was named after J.J. McAlester, a storekeeper and trader with First Americans who opened the town’s first coal mine.

Albert grew up with his family in a small, rural community northeast of McAlester called Bug Tussle. He helped his family in the fields, both before and after school. Collecting and carrying wood and water became a daily chore for Albert, as well as milking the cows, chopping cotton, bailing hay and thrashing oats (Albert and Goble 23).



Figure 1: Young Carl Albert posing for a picture. State Museum Collection. Margaret Lakey Collection. Photo courtesy of the *Oklahoma Historical Society*.



Figure 2: Carl Albert with his father and mother. Carl Albert Collection. Photo courtesy of the *Oklahoma Historical Society*.

During Albert’s youthful days, Bug Tussle was a melting pot of families from different backgrounds and of all walks of life. This diverse community gave Albert the opportunity to experience different cultures, perspectives and values. In the early 1900s, segregation, the enforced separation of different racial groups, was normal throughout the state and country, and Albert quickly took notice of the differences in treatments it caused. He felt segregation was unfair, inhumane and un-Christian (Albert and Goble 379). Knowing this, he did not let others’ civic virtues, or one’s action toward another person or group based on what they believe is right, decide who he would befriend.



Figure 3: Carl Albert makes a return visit to the Bug Tussle school in September 1946. Photo courtesy of *Tulsa World*. AP file photo 1946.

Albert became good friends with Joe Thomas, a young African American boy who lived nearby in a community known as Reams Prairie. Albert and Thomas walked to school together each day, but the two young boys would eventually go in different directions – Albert went to the white school, while Thomas went to the black school (Albert and Goble 33). After seeing the many differences between the white and black schools, Albert made a promise, “I promised myself that if I were ever in a position to do something about it, I would” (Albert and Goble 34).

Education



Figure 4: Portrait of young Carl Albert. Carl Albert Collection. Photo courtesy of *Oklahoma Historical Society*.

Albert valued education from an early age, and he used educational opportunities to advance himself. He graduated from McAlester High School where he had been named class valedictorian, student body president, homeroom president, Golden M Club president and poetry club president (Albert and Goble 42). In August 1927, Albert enrolled in classes at the University of Oklahoma (OU) and excelled. His oratory skills provided him the opportunity to travel, compete and interact with some of Oklahoma’s earliest politicians and entrepreneurs.

Albert graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1931 and studied on a Rhodes Scholarship at University of Oxford in England, where he received two law degrees

(Kotlowski 18). Shortly after, Albert served in the United States Army from 1941-46 and earned a Bronze Star for his service in World War II (Kotlowski 18). With every adventure of his life, he remained committed to serving others.

Political Career

One year after serving in the army, Albert's political career began. Albert served as an Oklahoma State Representative from 1947-77 in the U.S. House of Representatives (Kotlowski 17). He also served as the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives (the presiding officer of the House of Representatives) from 1971-77. During his political career in Washington, D.C., Albert experienced some of the hardest times in American history, including the Vietnam War (1955-75), the American Indian termination period (1953-68) and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy (1963). Although times were tough, Albert remained firm in his civic values and committed to the American people, including those he believed were treated unfairly due to the color of their skin.



Figure 5: Young Carl Albert. Margaret Lakey Collection, State Museum. Photo courtesy of the *Oklahoma Historical Society*.

Carl Albert and the state of Oklahoma

In 1953, Congress adopted the policy of “termination,” which turned over federal responsibility and jurisdiction of some tribal governments to some state governments. Termination policy took away official recognition by the U.S. government and restricted tribal sovereignty (the ability for tribal nations to make decisions for themselves).

The United States aggressively worked to assimilate (to take in or absorb) all First Americans into the American culture in hopes to eliminate tribal identities, cultures, languages and lands. This issue was nothing new to Albert because the population of his home state was one-quarter First American (Kotlowski 17-18). Albert was known for eagerly listening to both his fellow politicians and those who voted for him. Albert listened to his First American voters

as they strongly encouraged politicians to end termination and the severe restrictions placed upon them. Albert asked the federal government to take away the strong hold they had on tribes, thereby ensuring that tribes were free to govern themselves.

Slowly, the United States began a shift of policy from termination toward self-determination, the process of tribal nations governing themselves, beginning in 1963. This gave tribal nations autonomy to administer programs offered by the United States government themselves. On July 8, 1970, President Richard Nixon eagerly spoke to Congress regarding the health and well-being of First Americans. Specifically, his message singled out the idea of terminating tribes. Nixon, along with other American leaders, including then United States Speaker of the House of



Figure 6: Speaker Carl Albert, right, and Vice President Spiro Agnew, left, applaud President Richard Nixon during the State of the Union address on January 20, 1972. Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Photography Collection. *Oklahoma Historical Society.*

Representatives Albert, worked to promote self-determination. Nixon argued to Congress that they had no grounds to deny First Americans their rights guaranteed by treaty and law than they did to deny the rights of any other American citizen (Morgan 4).

Along with advocating for First American nations, Albert stood up for equality of all people in Oklahoma. Albert contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made major forms of discrimination against African Americans, women and other persons of color, including segregation, illegal. The segregation and racism that plagued the United States and Albert's hometown of McAlester was now against the law.

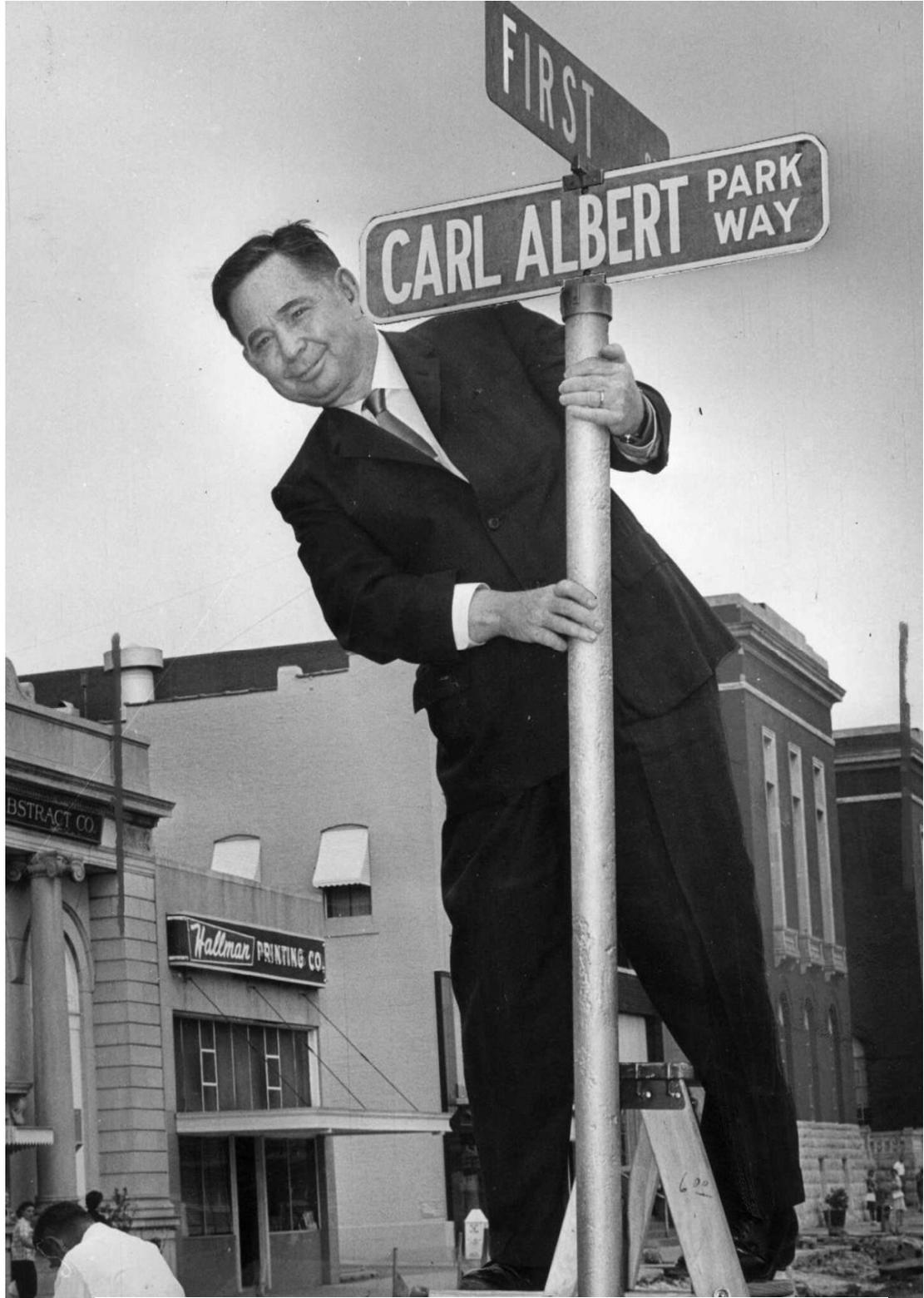


Figure 7: Former U.S. House Speaker Carl Albert climbs a step ladder to peer down McAlester's Grand Avenue in this undated file photo. The street was renamed Carl Albert Parkway. Photo courtesy of *Tulsa World*. AP File photo 1964.

Carl Albert and the Chickasaw Nation



Figure 8: Gov. Overton James and Speaker Carl Albert. Photo courtesy of the *Chickasaw Nation Collection*.

The Chickasaw Nation, along with many other First American tribes in Oklahoma and throughout the United States, did not have access to quality health care and other services promised to them through treaty stipulations.

In 1963, as the national government began transferring more power and programs to First American nations, the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, appointed Overton James Governor of the Chickasaw Nation. Albert worked with Governor James and the Chickasaw Nation to provide greater access to quality health care for Chickasaws and other tribal nations.

Many Chickasaw activists, ministers and citizens, including James, Jesse and Sadie Humes, Jonas Imotichey, Abijah Colbert and Mary Stone McClendon (*Ataloo*),

worked to gain cooperation from the federal government and to seek greater access to health care (Morgan 5).

Through the efforts of Governor Overton James and the grassroots leaders, and Albert's support, a competitive proposal was won to locate a new Indian Health Services (IHS) inside the Chickasaw Nation. In 1968, the first health care facility within the Chickasaw Nation boundaries, called the Chickasaw Nation Tishomingo Health Clinic, opened in Tishomingo, Oklahoma (Morgan 6). The clinic was a huge step forward for the Chickasaw Nation and its citizens. Shortly after, the need for health services exceeded the clinic's capabilities. Again, Albert and the grassroots leaders went to work advocating for additional health care services for Chickasaws and other First Americans. Although Albert retired as Speaker of the



Figure 9: Speaker Carl Albert, middle, and Gov. Overton James, right, during a dedication ceremony. Photo courtesy of the *Chickasaw Nation Collection*.

House of Representatives in January 1977, he continued to work alongside the grassroots leaders to see a new health care facility open within the Chickasaw Nation.

On June 14, 1980, the Carl Albert Indian Health Facility, located in Ada, Oklahoma, opened. The hospital was named for Albert in honor of his commitment and support of the Chickasaw Nation's citizens and heritage. For Indian Country and the Chickasaw Nation, health care services quickly improved.



Figure 10: Photo of Carl Albert Indian Health Facility approaching the emergency room entrance. Photo courtesy of the *Chickasaw Nation Collection*.

The Legacy of Carl Albert

Carl Albert passed away Feb. 4, 2000. The cooperation and support Albert gave to the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Country and the state of Oklahoma demonstrates the character he established 72 years prior in a small, rural community called Bug Tussle. In one of his last public speeches, Albert remarked on the changing times and how pleased he was with the progressions in public policy that provided greater opportunities for all. In July 1987, while speaking at the funeral of his dear childhood friend, Joe Thomas, Albert remarked, "I told Joe's family how

happy I was that Joe Thomas and I had lived long enough to see it [segregation] end and how glad I was that Joe’s grandchildren would have a better chance. I told them that I was thankful they had given me the chance to help make that true” (Albert and Goble 379).

Albert indeed helped make that dream come true in 1962, when Thomas’s daughter, Gloria Thomas-Wyatt, left segregated McAlester and moved to Washington to pursue a college education (Correspondence, 2016). Albert provided Thomas-Wyatt the opportunity to work in the U.S. House of Representatives as an elevator operator (Correspondence, 2016). In addition, Albert mentored her on public policy, and she attended joint sessions of Congress with President Lyndon B. Johnson, where she often spoke with members of Congress, including Gerald Ford, Morris Udall, Bob Dole, Tip



Figure 11: Speaker Carl Albert and childhood friend Joe Thomas’s daughter, Gloria Thomas-Wyatt, pose for a picture in McAlester, year undated. *Photo courtesy of Thomas-Wyatt Collections.*

O’Neill and James Roosevelt (Correspondence, 2016).

Albert’s legacy (memorable contributions made) lives on within the Chickasaw Nation. On Nov. 17, 2015, the former Carl Albert Indian Health Facility building was renamed the Carl Albert Service Center (CASC). The CASC is dedicated to the training and education of Chickasaw Nation employees and citizens. The new use of the building is a testimony to Albert’s respect and love of education and his dedication to the Chickasaw Nation.



Figure 11: Standing in front of the Carl Albert statue at the University of Oklahoma are members of the 2009 Chickasaw Nation Learning Community, including left to right, (front row) Sam Rice, Stephanie Pritchett, Ahrens Kernwood, (back row) Joe Thomas, Jennifer Taylor and program facilitator Brent Sykes.



Figure 12: Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby, center, is joined by tribal officials during the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Carl Albert Service Center, formerly the Carl Albert Indian Health Facility, Nov. 17, 2015. Photo courtesy of the *Chickasaw Nation Collection*.

Reference List

- Albert, Carl and Danney Goble. *Little Giant: The Life and Times of Speaker Carl Albert*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1999. Print.
- Allen, LaRadius. "McAlester, James Jackson." *Oklahoma Historical Society*. Oklahoma Historical Society, 2009. 12 July 2016. Helmrich, Brittney. "33 Ways to Define Leadership." *Business News Daily*. 5 April 2016. Web. 12 July 2016.
- Correspondence. Gloria Thomas-Wyatt. Email. 2016.
- Kotlowski, Dean J. "Limited Vision: Carl Albert, the Choctaws, and Native American Self-Determination." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 26.2 (2002):17-43. Print.
- Morgan, Phillip C. *Riding Out the Storm: 19th Century Chickasaw Governors, Their Lives and Intellectual Legacy*. Chickasaw Press, 2013. Print.

Carl Albert Biography

Name: Carl Albert

Nickname:

Hometown:

Born _____ **Died** _____

Beliefs and Values:

Early Life:

Positions Held:

Impact on Oklahoma:

-
-
-

Impact on the Chickasaw Nation:

-
-
-
-

Carl Albert Biography

Name: Carl Albert
Nickname: Little Giant
Hometown: McAlester
Born: May 10, 1908
Died: Feb. 4, 2000

Beliefs and Values:

Christian
Valued education
Believed in equality
Strived to help others

Early Life:

Helped his family on the farm
Grew up during segregation
Went to an all-white school
Childhood friend was African American
Took many educational opportunities

Political Positions Held:

High school: Student body president, homeroom president, Golden M Club president and poetry club president
Oklahoma representative in the U.S. House of Representatives
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

Impact on Oklahoma:

- Helped end segregation
- Advocated for self-determination
- Fought for greater access to quality health care for First Americans

Impact on the Chickasaw Nation:

- Supported Chickasaw leadership
- Advocated for the Chickasaw people
- Advanced health care for Tishomingo and Ada sites
- Helped secure funding for the Carl Albert Indian Health Facility

Student Exit Ticket

Which of the following are examples of Carl Albert's civic virtue?
(Choose all that apply)

- ✓ Served 30 years as Oklahoma representative in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1947-1977
- ✓ Served as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1971-1977
- ✓ Contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- ✓ Promoted self-determination of tribes
- ✓ Stood up for what he believed was right
- ✓ Refused to listen to others' views
- ✓ Utilized his leadership to stay involved and to help others
- ✓ Only tried to help himself
- ✓ Served in the U.S. Army, 1941-1946

What is civic virtue?

Student Exit Ticket

Which of the following are examples of Carl Albert's civic virtue?
(Choose all that apply)

- ✓ Served 30 years as Oklahoma representative in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1947-1977
- ✓ Served as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1971-1977
- ✓ Contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- ✓ Promoted self-determination of tribes
- ✓ Stood up for what he believed was right
- ✓ Refused to listen to others' views
- ✓ Utilized his leadership to stay involved and to help others
- ✓ Only tried to help himself
- ✓ Served in the U.S. Army, 1941-1946

What is civic virtue?

Civic virtue is when a citizen acts on what they believe is the best interest of others or their community.
