

0. The Legacy of Wilma Mankiller - Story Preface

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5. The Legacy of Wilma Mankiller



In 2010, Wilma Mankiller was diagnosed with Stage-4 pancreatic cancer, and she died on April 6th of that year at the age of 64. However, her legacy lives on—not only in what she did to change the Cherokee Nation, but how she worked to change the world view of the history and future of all Native Americans everywhere.

The Cherokee Nations Industries today include factories, motels, ranches and a lumber company. In 1998, President Bill Clinton awarded Ms. Mankiller the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

She also won several awards including *Ms. Magazine's* Woman of the Year in 1987, the *Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame*, Woman of the Year, the *Elizabeth Blackwell* Award, *John W. Gardner* Leadership Award, Independent Sector,¹ and was inducted into the *National Women's Hall of Fame* in 1993.¹

In 1993, Mankiller received the American Association of University Women's Achievement Award. A 2013 feature film, "The Cherokee Word for Water," tells the story of the Bell waterline project that helped launch Mankiller's political career.

Before she died, Wilma released this statement:

I want my family and friends to know that I am mentally and spiritually prepared for this journey; a journey that all human beings will take at one time or another. I learned a long time ago that I can't control the challenges the Creator sends my way but I can control the way I think about them and deal with them. On balance, I have been blessed with an extraordinarily rich and wonderful life.

Wilma Mankiller, 2010

In true Cherokee fashion, she faced death with the same courage and dignity with which she lived her life. Not only the Cherokees -- not only all Native Americans -- but all Americans owe a debt of gratitude to one of the bravest fighters for human rights in modern times. This is the legacy of Wilma Mankiller.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/The-Legacy-of-Wilma-Mankiller-Wilma-Mankiller-Cherokee-Chief>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/The-Legacy-of-Wilma-Mankiller-Wilma-Mankiller-Cherokee-Chief>

Questions 2 Ponder

What Is It Like to Be in a School with People Not Like Me?

When Wilma Mankiller moved to a new place, and attended a new school, she met people who were not like her.

If a new student entered your class and looked or acted or sounded different than you and your friends, what would be the reaction of your friends to the new person? What would be your reaction?

If you were the new student, how would you expect people who were not like you to treat you? If they didn't treat you well, how would you respond?



Wilma Mankiller

Indian Country

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