

# EDUCATION



**Cherokee Davis** was recruited by Scottsdale Community College, (Courtesy photo)

By DON DECKER  
YAN News

Talent abounds in Indian country and Cherokee Davis, the daughter of Christopher and Yvonne Davis of Ft. McDowell finds a fulfilling experience as a basketball player for Scottsdale Community College. Young Davis carries a full load of classes pursuing her life goals majoring in Sociology with a mix of Criminology. She graduated from Mountain View High School in Mesa.

At first, Davis played for Mesa Community College as guard with an athletic scholarship. Shortly thereafter, she withdrew her contract with the school and was recruited by Scottsdale Community College.

**Cherokee  
Camisha  
Davis  
excels in  
sports  
and  
academics**

"I wasn't getting enough playing time and felt that I needed to rack up my stats for any other school to look at me for recruiting," said Davis as she moved on.

"Being in sports arena contributes my focus diligently and conscientiously to seek programs that are fulfilling to my interests, challenging to my skills and anything positive to my emulate in

life," she added

Davis's mother, Yvonne, who is an enrolled member of the Ft. McDowell community, is the daughter of Robert and Abigail Russell and granddaughter of the late Henry and Daisy Russell. Young Russell is enrolled with the Yavapai-Apache Nation and is very proud of her family roots. Both of her parents had extensive careers in working in the federal government and Davis' father, Christopher Davis Jr., now retired, had a great influence on Davis while growing up. "My father is a coach of football at Fountain Hills Middle and High School (schools that adjoin the Ft. McDowell Nation). He also coached cross country," said Davis.

Davis' father also was a

sprinter for the City College of San Francisco and was looking to trying out for the Dallas Cowboys when he was drafted into the Army said Davis.

"My descendants are Hualapai, Yavapai and Apache, Cherokee and African American. 'Cherokee' is my dad's tribe and 'Camisha' originated as a Western African tribe- meaning 'beautiful on the inside and out. Fun and easy going, Friend to those who are kind.' And my last name is a slave name that was given to my father's great grandfather," she said.

For now, Davis is focused on academics although the basketball season concluded.

She has some good advice for those who want to pursue college basketball:

"It starts early in life and with each year, you get better. It takes consistency (and) challenges. And more so- determination. Continue to work on your academics and your grades really count."

Davis is also personable and wants to assure youth that everything is possible. "Just carry yourself, always smile, always greet and be thankful because you didn't get where you are by yourself. At the end of the day, be thankful that you are able and everything will fall into place. Nothing is hard, unless you make it."

After Davis graduates from Scottsdale Community College, she is looking at Grand Canyon University or other schools in California to finish her bachelor's degree.

## Taya Smith, softball player at Camp Verde High signs with Paradise Community College



**Taya Smith (l)** is completing her senior year with a perfect record and continuing on to Paradise Community College this coming fall, 2016 as pitcher for that college's softball team. (Photo by Greg Macafee).

Taya (r) is a special team player for the high school and her coach is her father, Henry Smith of the Yavapai-Apache Nation. She will also be the recipient of the Nation's scholarship program. (Photo by Don Decker)

By DON DECKER  
YAN News

It Taya Smith, daughter of Henry Smith, of Tunlii and Christina Parker of Camp Verde, has signed a letter of intent to pitch softball for the Paradise Community College in north Phoenix for the coming academic year.

Included in these plans is a 2-year degree from that college and enrolling at the University of Florida in Tampa where she will study Criminology, attend the police academy after she receives her Bachelors Degree and wants to join the FBI.

That is a tall order for Smith and this success comes through family support.

Young Smith credits her father, Henry, for her success in pitching as her father is the coach for the high school where she plays and has coached her ever since the T-ball days of long ago up through her last year of high school.

"It's a dream come true-your little kid (now 17 years old) and give them your 100% and all that hard work pays off," says dad Smith. "Softball

has been a huge blessing for her, to build herself a good reputation. She represents our people-the Yavapai-Apache Nation".

Taya is of the 'Ya'go'in gaii' clan which means where 'the white rock formation juts out on the mesa'.

Sports writer - photojournalist Greg Macafee of the Camp Verde Journal, caught up with Taya and wrote that 'Smith was the first to sign—and even though she had received other offers'.

Macafee further quotes Smith as saying that, "The Paradise Valley coaches were just very kind and they were very welcoming and very helpful. I knew as soon as he started talking, Paradise Valley Community College was where I wanted to go".

Meanwhile, dad Smith keeps posting Facebook notices daily on his coaching record while lady Smith keeps 'no walks', 'no home runs' and 'nobody on base' records.

It's an 8-0 record into April now!

## Nation member excels in education



**Moran Thinka** is beginning his Phd. through Phoenix College. He is currently employed by the San Carlos Apache Tribe in the finance department. (Photo by Don Decker)

By DON DECKER  
YAN News

Moran Thinka, tribal member, who enrolled in the Nation in the early 90s, is a currently employed by the San Carlos Tribe in the Finance and Purchasing department.

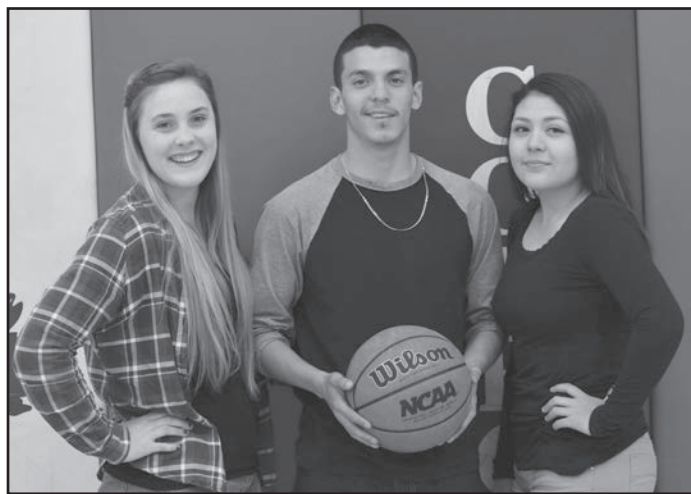
Moran possesses 3 college degrees with an Associate of Arts Degree in Business Administration from Eastern Arizona College in Thatcher, a B.A. in Public Policy from Arizona State University, a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Phoenix. He is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Phoenix.

His grandparents were the late Frank and Minnie Thinka with strong ties to the Yavapai-Apache Nation as they were both members of the Nation. Frank, was a Yavapai and grandma Minne was Dilzhe'e.

Frank's parents were Willie and Emma Thinka of Clarkdale.

Young Thinka's parents are of the Yavapai-Apache/Ft. Berthold Sioux side.

Thinka expects to eventually return to the Nation once he makes arrangements for permanent housing and employment he said.



**Gabby Ontiveros (r)** was the recipient of the Division IV All-Section Honors for the current school year. Classmates Allee Drake (l) who played ball with Ontiveros and Javier Perez (m) who played for the Camp Verde boys team were also honored. (Photo by Greg Macafee).

## Nation member exceeds in basketball at Camp Verde High School

By DON DECKER  
YAN News

Gabby Ontiveros, daughter of Marlon Ontiveros of Yavapai-Apache Nation in Middle Verde was the recipient of the Division IV All-Section Honors for the current school year.

Ontiveros finished up the year with her team playing the Division IV State tour-

namment but lost to the Pima Roughriders in the first round 57-32.

Presently, Ontiveros has plans to pick one of the offers of playing college basketball for the coming school year.

Classmates Allee Drake who played ball with Ontiveros and Javier Perez who played for the Camp Verde boys team were also honored as well.



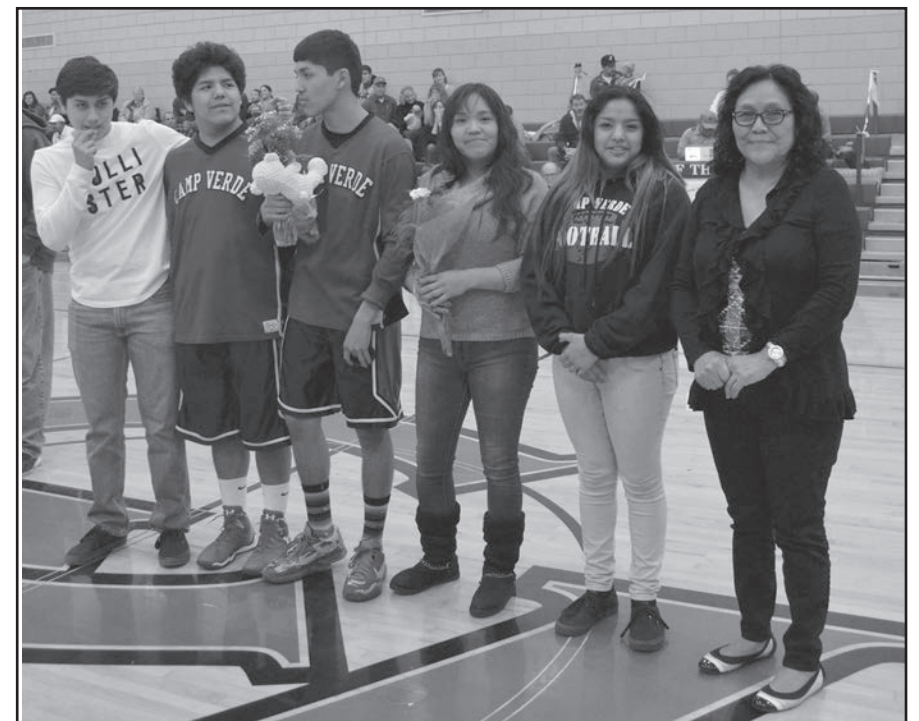
## 2 Mile Fun Walk/Run & 5K (3.2 m)

**Date:** April 16, 2016  
**Time:** 8:00 A.M.  
**Location:** YAN Culture Building Parking Lot  
*Meet up and registration begin at 7:30 am*

**For more information contact:**  
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Sponsored by: The Yavapai-Apache Nation Environmental Protection Department & hosted by The South Verde Native American Club



**(L) Ashton Loring**, who is graduating from Mingus Union High School this spring, stands with the Herrera family during a special recognition night at Camp Verde High School. Next to Loring is Reyes Herrera, 11th grader, brother Thomas Herrera who is graduating this year, Jessica Herrera, mother to the Herrera brothers and her is daughter, Sicily Herrera and grandmother Leona Wathogoma of Middle Verde. (Photo by Don Decker)

## Camp Verde High School athletic department recognizes Thomas Herrera

By DON DECKER  
YAN News

Yavapai-Apache Nation members contribute to the sports program in Verde Valley and this special recognition is bestowed upon Thomas Herrera of Middle Verde who is graduating this coming school year. Herrera has some big plans with pursuing his education while he is on active duty with the U.S. Army.

Herrera will soon be heading to basic training in Ft. Benning, Georgia, home of the notorious 82nd Airborne Division of the U.S. Army for his basic training and advance infantry training. It's a long-term commitment for Herrera.

Help line !!

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