



Helen McGhee Hallman

Helen serves her people well. As a Tribal Council Member for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians for eight years, an honor only few women can claim, she is known as a communicator and someone who gets things done. This is what initially prompted her to run for office, her role as she sees it is to be a voice for her people. An advocate for the Poarch Creeks, Ms. Hallman has been instrumental in creating change in her numerous areas of interest which include health, education, housing, jobs and culture.

While serving on the Tribal Council, Hallman also serves on the Community Activities Legislative Committee, Education/Labor Legislative Committee, and the Health/Human Services Legislative Committee. She has previously served on the Pow Wow Committee for five years and on the Housing Authority Board for ten years.

Ms. Hallman comes from a family who has long served their people. Her late brother, Chairman Fred L. McGhee, served as a Tribal Council Member and as Tribal Chairman for 2 terms. Her son, Rodney Exum has also served as a Tribal Council Member. Her family lineage also includes other Poarch Creek leaders, including her paternal uncle “Chief” Calvin McGhee and her maternal grandfather “Chief” Fred Walker.

Born on July 16, 1938 to Treacy Walker and Levi McGhee, Ms. Hallman grew up in the rural hamlet of Hog Fork, which is part of the Indian community known as Poarch, Alabama. She attended Poarch Community School, Poarch, AL, through the sixth grade, and then Escambia County High School Atmore, AL up until age sixteen, when she quit school to help her parents raise her eight siblings. Ms. Hallman returned to school and at age fifty earned her high school diploma, and then attended Riley College, Dothan, AL for one year taking computer and clerical courses. After going to work in the local factory and doing seasonal agricultural work, Ms. Hallman married Don Exum at age eighteen, they have 3 grown children: Rodney, Cindy, and Ryan, and four grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren.

In 1990 Helen was diagnosed with breast cancer and her story was featured in a 1995 exhibit at the Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama, her story along with others from the exhibit were featured in the book *Breast Cancer Survivors, A Tribe of Warrior Women*. Ms. Hallman is a cancer survivor and an inspiration to many.

As she continues to work for her people, she does so with goals for the future. Ms. Hallman has seen many changes happen over the years with the Tribe, however she would still like to see a few more implemented. One such change is for tribal members to learn new skills that would enable them to get better jobs and to attain higher education. She also feels it is time for more women to be in leadership roles. As for Ms. Hallman she will continue the walk of leadership her ancestors began many years ago.