

## Biography of Chief Diane Shields

Diane Shields was elected Chief of the Monacan Indian Nation on June 17, 2023.

Linda Diane Johns Shields was born in Virginia to Louis D. Johns and Louise Cook Johns. At the age of five, her family relocated to Ohio. Her paternal heritage is rooted in the Monacan Tribe; her grandparents were Teddy Johns and Ethel Bell Branham. Chief Shields' great-grandparents were Johnny Branham and Ella Beverly on her grandmother's side, and Sidney Johns and Ella Terry on her grandfather's side.

Chief Shields's interest in genealogy sparked a journey of exploring her family's roots. Her father's Monacan ancestry brought her to Amherst, Virginia in 1992 to enjoy the Monacan powwow and obtain her tribal enrollment card. Overwhelmed by her connection to the Monacan people, Chief Shields and her husband decided to move to Amherst County in 1993. Since then, she has committed herself to serving her people and advocating for their rights and heritage.

Chief Shields' professional journey spans several roles and industries. She has served in office and records management positions at the Palm Bay Police Department, in Amherst County Schools, and at Central Virginia Community College.

On moving to Amherst County, Chief Shields soon began volunteering for Monacan committees. She served on the boards of Monacan Pamunkey Mattaponi Consortium (MPM) and the United Indians of Virginia. She contributed significantly to gathering historical research and genealogical evidence to document the Monacan Indian Community's continuity as part of an initiative to secure federal recognition. She was pivotal in creating the original tribal enrollment rolls and crafting the application for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to recognize the Monacan Indian Nation formally.

Beyond her research, Chief Shields was diligent in rectifying birth records and ensuring the community's taxes and land taxes were up to date. She held various leadership positions within the community, including Assistant Chief, Secretary, and Treasurer. She was on the Council when the Monacan Indian Nation achieved federal recognition and played a key role in establishing the first 638 contract with the BIA to build the nation's office.

After achieving federal recognition in 2018, Chief Shields assumed the role of director for the Monacan Nation Cultural Foundation, the Tribe's nonprofit arm.

As Chief Shields continues to serve the Monacan Indian Nation, she aims to facilitate better communication and heal disputes within her community. She is keen on hearing innovative ideas to improve and enrich the Nation. Her vision encompasses open dialogues, the recognition of past achievements, and the commitment to work hard for a prosperous future. Chief Shields encourages regular face-to-face meetings to exchange knowledge and foster a sense of unity amongst her people.

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