

received
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November 23, 1993

Wilma Mankiller
Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation
P.O. Box 948
Tahlequah, OK 74465

Dear Chief Mankiller:

It was a pleasure to see you again at the Barnes and Noble booksigning. I was impressed and flattered that you recognized me after so long a time!

I'm writing first of all to congratulate you on your book. It is a fine piece of work. The alternating chapters on Cherokee history and the progress of your own life work brilliantly; each enriches the other, and people who buy the book out of curiosity about you will find themselves learning a great deal more than they bargained for about Cherokees. And you couldn't have found a more powerful expression of the way in which the two subjects are inextricably entwined in your spirit.

Although I've learned a certain amount of Cherokee history and lore in the last couple of years, I'm still continually coming across material I've never seen before, and your book was yet another fertile source. I was particularly struck by the W. A. Duncan letter you cite on page 167, explaining the point of title in common. "If [business] had power to control the elements, it would grasp in its iron clutches the waters, sunshine and air and resell them by measure..." is an amazingly powerful passage, majestic in its rhetoric and yet entirely without pomposity, and it has even more resonance a hundred years later, doesn't it? I've copied the text out to inflict on my friends.

The personal side of your history is equally inspiring. From conversations with Robert Conley and others I had already gotten a sketch of who you are, what you've accomplished, and what you've been through, but I didn't know the details. Let me say how greatly I admire you for your fortitude in the face of so much adversity, and for the steadfastness of your vision of the Cherokee past, present, and future, and of your place in it.

As I told you, the *Mountain Windsong* project is progressing very well... but I'll let Robert fill you in on that when he feels the time is ripe. There is one aspect of it, however, which I would like to ask you about, and which I feel should be addressed before long.

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