

## Chickasaw entrepreneur named 'Houston's Small Business Person of the Year'



Jennifer Lewis named Houston's Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Chickasaw citizen Jennifer Lewis, of Houston, was honored June 1 for her hard work, determination and dedication.

Mrs. Lewis was named Houston's Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Mrs. Lewis founded J & P Technologies, a computer programming consultant firm, in 1997. The company was named for Mrs. Lewis and her husband, Phil, a mechanical engineer who provides management assistance.

Mrs. Lewis began growing her business when she hired her first employee in 2002. In

2006 the company landed a contract to provide system engineering services to Johnson Space Center and she added more staff.

In 2009, she doubled her staff to 30.

Several staff members work with Science Applications International Corporation to provide safety and mission assurance for NASA. When certain computer programs were modified, Mrs. Lewis and her employees checked to make sure the change was safe.

"We analyze any hardware or software change for the Space Shuttle and we do a risk analy-

sis and determine if it is safe and what are the risks associated with it," she explained.

Her employees also work with Lockheed Martin at Johnson Space Center to support hazard analysis.

"We verify any hardware or software changes are safe and monitor the flight at the control center console," she said. "If there is a problem, they help analyze it from a safety standpoint."

Several things helped this Chickasaw entrepreneur launch her company. Among them were being certified as a woman-owned business with the federal government, and being certified as a small disadvantaged business because of her Chickasaw heritage.

"Being Native American was a big part of it," Mrs. Lewis said.

She was able to secure a Small Business Development loan in 2005 to really get her business off the ground.

"The loan helps small companies that can't financially compete with the big ones," she said. "It really helps get your foot in the door, but you still

have to perform."

She credits her staff for much of her success.

"In this line of work my assets are my people, they are the ones who make the business work," she said. "I am very blessed with the wonderful group of people."

One of her goals is to provide the same employee benefits her staff would find at a larger company. She also works to find consulting contracts for her employees.

### A Family Connection

As a young child in the Houston area, Jennifer Lewis grew up in the space industry and was fascinated by it. Her father, Gene Gentry, was a mathematician and computer scientist who worked on the Apollo and Space Shuttle programs.

Among his projects at NASA was a map of the moon which is now hanging in the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

### Family Helped Pave the Way

After earning a bachelor's degree in computer science, Jennifer Lewis worked at Johnson Space Center in the aerospace industry for about 15 years.

"I was working in aerospace

when I decided to quit and spend time consulting, mainly to be able to spend time with my daughter," Mrs. Lewis said.

Then along came an opportunity to do some part-time programming for a bio medical company.

"It was wonderful," she said.

With the support and encouragement of her husband, she continued to grow her business.

### Chickasaw Connections

Jennifer Lewis is proud of her Chickasaw heritage.

She is a direct descendant of Cyrus Harris, Edmund Pickens and Guy and Lulu Keel, original Chickasaw enrollees.

Her grandmother is Juanita Tate, a member of the Chickasaw Hall of Fame. Her parents are Gene and Gwin Gentry, who grew up in Ardmore, Okla. Chickasaw composer Jared Tate and legislature Shana Tate-Hammond are her cousins.

Mrs. Lewis lives in the Houston area with her husband and their two daughters, Emily, 13, and Nicole, 10.

**CONTRIBUTED BY** Dana Lance, tribal media relations.

## Chickasaw U.S. Navy veteran saw action in both European, Pacific Theatres of Operation during WWII



Petty Officer Robert Kincaid

June 6, 2010 marks the 66th anniversary of the Allied forces' D-Day invasion of France. The

success of the operation led to the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany in less than one year.

Following is the story of one Chickasaw veteran who participated in the landings.

Robert Louis Kincaid entered the U.S. Navy in October 1942. He became a pharmacist's mate, now known as a hospital corpsman.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Kincaid was assigned to LST 422. The morning of June 22, 1944, he was aboard the tank landing ship carrier along with 150 U.S. Army Rangers waiting for the shelling to let up before

landing at Normandy. Petty Officer Kincaid's ship was off the coast for four days, taking on and treating the wounded. His LST made three trips across the English Channel taking wounded Rangers to English hospitals, and returning with supplies.

He returned to the U.S. and was assigned to LST 322. Petty Officer Kincaid soon found himself in the Pacific Theatre. His LST transported troops and equipment to Guadalcanal, Australia, China and Okinawa. He was in Nagasaki, Japan just two weeks following the dropping of the atomic bomb.

For his service, Petty Officer Kincaid received European Theatre operations with bronze stars; Pacific Theatre operations with bronze stars; and a Good Conduct medal.

He was discharged in November 1945 and returned to his hometown of Wynnewood, Okla. He met a beautiful Western Union worker named Esther

Weakes, and they were soon married. Mr. Kincaid resumed his work at Coonrod's Funeral Home in Wynnewood. He spent 50 years as a funeral director in McKinney, Texas.

Mrs. Kincaid passed away in 2009. Mr. Kincaid lives in McKinney surrounded by his proud children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## Memorial bricks offered by Chickasaw Historical Society

Chickasaw citizens now have the opportunity to purchase memorial bricks to be placed at locations with historic Chickasaw significance.

The Chickasaw Historical Society is offering the bricks for \$25 each. The bricks may include birth dates, death dates, graduations and genealogical

information.

Citizens may choose to have bricks placed at Seeley Chapel, the historic Chickasaw Capitol or the Chickasaw White House.

The brick placements will coincide with this year's Chickasaw Festival and Annual Meeting.

The Chickasaw Historical Society is honored to include citizens in this small piece of history.

For more information and to purchase bricks, contact Verna Todd at (580) 559-0847 or verna.todd@chickasaw.net

### McCarty Family Reunion

La Quinta Inn

2828 E. Arlington, Ada, OK

July 2 - July 4, 2010

Persons interested in attending may contact Richard Burton at (831) 635-0248 or email [realburton@peoplepc.com](mailto:realburton@peoplepc.com)

### Cravatt Family Reunion

11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

July 31, 2010

Chickasaw Community Center

700 North Mississippi, Ada, OK

For more information contact Dinah Worcester at [Dinah.Worcester@chickasaw.net](mailto:Dinah.Worcester@chickasaw.net), (580) 371-0150 or (580) 559-3089; Norma Prince at (580) 235-2153.