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## ***N E W S   R E L E A S E***

### **Tulsa's Council Oak designated a 'Witness Tree' as part of Oklahoma Centennial Celebration**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The historic Council Oak tree that marks Tulsa's birth as a community has been selected by the State of Oklahoma as an official "Witness Tree" as part of the state's centennial celebration. The Council Oak is in Council Oak Park located at 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Cheyenne Ave.

"We are proud to have the Council Oak Tree designated as an official Witness Tree," said Mayor Kathy Taylor. "This tree has indeed stood as a symbol of our heritage and history. Oklahoma has much to celebrate in this centennial year, and 'witness tree' is a fitting designation for this celebration."

The Witness Tree Project is a joint effort of The Tree Bank Foundation, the Forestry Services of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and The Oklahoma Centennial Commission. According to Becky Durrett, Vice President of The Tree Bank, "The purpose of the Centennial Witness Tree project is to find trees which 'witnessed' Oklahoma statehood in 1907 and also to locate the first trees planted by Oklahoma settlers."

Trees eligible for the Witness Tree Project must have an estimated age of more than one hundred years and stand within the boundaries of the state of Oklahoma. Each Witness Tree will be registered on an official list and the owner will receive an Oklahoma Centennial Commission certificate. Descriptions of the tree's historical significance or any special interest stories about the Witness Trees will be compiled and published in a commemorative booklet.

Witness Tree  
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The Creek Council tree, a mature post oak, marks the traditional "ceremonial ground" chosen in 1836 by the Lochapoka clan of the Creek Indians. In 1834, they had begun their involuntary migration from Alabama under the control of the U.S. government. The Tulsa-Lochapoka, a division of the Creek Nation, established their "town" on this site.

The park is often referred to as Tulsa's first City Hall. As late as 1896 the Tulsa-Lochapoka gathered here for ceremonies, feasts and games. Today, commemorative tribal ceremonies are held each year. The park is protected by Historic Preservation zoning and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

-30-



The Council Oak (in background) is in Council Oak Park located at 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Cheyenne Ave.