



## Mohegan Tribal Council Profiles



**James Gessner Jr., Chairman.** As Chairman, James Gessner Jr. is responsible for maintaining the sovereignty that the Mohegan Tribe fought hundreds of years for, overseeing its numerous business entities and ensuring the well-being of its more than 2,200 Tribal citizens. As Chairman, Gessner also serves as Chairman of the Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment (MGE) Management Board which oversees gaming entities across the country, as well as two professional sports teams. Gessner is in his fourth term on the Tribal Council and served as Vice Chairman prior to becoming Chairman. Gessner is a member of the Audit Committee for Mohegan Tribal Gaming Authority, as well as serving on the American Red Cross board. He is a member of the management boards for Tunica Biloxi Gaming Authority and Mohegan Holding Company's Jersey Mike's franchise. Gessner holds a bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant management from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, and prior to his terms on the Council he held executive positions at Mohegan Sun in the Marketing and Player Development divisions. He resides in Waterford, Connecticut with his wife Carol and daughter Nola. He also has an adult son, Nicholas.



**Sarah E. Harris, Vice Chairwoman.** Sarah Harris is currently serving her second term on the Tribal Council. Previously, she was an attorney at various law firms in the Washington DC area representing Native American tribes, tribal entities, and tribal organizations. In 2013, she received a presidential appointment to serve as Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and, prior to that, served as Special Assistant to the Solicitor in the Office of the Secretary of the US Department of the Interior. Harris earned her Juris Doctor from American University, Washington College of Law in 2005 and her Bachelor of Arts in Native American Studies from Dartmouth College in 2000. She currently serves a member of the Native American Visiting Committee, which advises the Dartmouth President on Native American issues at the College. In 2016, Harris was selected by the National Center for American Enterprise Development as a "Native American 40 Under 40" award recipient for her contributions in business and her community. Harris resides in Franklin, Connecticut, and is the proud mother of twins.



**Patricia A. LaPierre, Recording Secretary.** Patricia A. LaPierre is currently serving her first term on Tribal Council. Prior to serving on Tribal Council, LaPierre spent over 17 years in various roles within the Human Resources Department at Mohegan Sun, her most recent position as Vice President. She has a wide range of civic involvement with both her Tribe and her community. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Norwich Arts Center, the Board of Safe Futures, and for the Tribe as a Board of Education Member; and she served on the Public Health and Safety Committee for the Town of Griswold for 12 years. LaPierre received a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies from Providence College and a Master of Arts in Organizational Management from the University of Phoenix. She lives in Griswold, CT and is the mother to two children and grandmother to seven grandchildren.



**Joseph M. Soper, Corresponding Secretary.** Joseph M. Soper is currently serving his first term on Tribal Council. Prior to his term, Soper spent 15 years working for Mohegan Sun and Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment, first as a Senior Financial Analyst and later as the Director of Sports & Entertainment. In his role as director, he managed the day-to-day financial operations for the Sports & Entertainment department, maintaining a multi-million-dollar operating budget. In addition, he booked and assisted on executing thousands of events at the highest level within the industry. With his efforts he helped grow the Mohegan Sun Arena into a top 50 venue in the world, receiving over 16 national awards. He has had the opportunity to work with and develop relationships with some of the largest sports and entertainment agencies in the industry. In recent years, with the growth of the Mohegan Sun brand and the addition of properties with entertainment venues under the Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment umbrella, he has assisted these properties in their booking processes, programming, and construction. Soper attended Western New England University and received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a major in finance.



**Thayne D. Hutchins, Jr., Treasurer.** Thayne D. Hutchins, Jr. has served on the Tribal Council since 2007. He is well prepared for his position as Treasurer, having worked for six years in the finance department of the Mohegan Tribe. As a staff accountant, Hutchins' business skills were employed in a variety of responsibilities, including the analysis and monitoring of the Tribe's many financial concerns. Hutchins graduated Magna Cum Laude from Eastern Connecticut State University, holding a B.A. in Economics with a concentration in accounting. He is a board member of SECTER (Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region), he serves on the Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment Audit Committee, and he is also on the Eastern Workforce Innovation Board (EWIB) where he serves as the Vice Chair. Hutchins resides in Hampton, Connecticut, with his wife Angela and children Madeleine and Thayne.



**Mark F. Brown, Ambassador.** Mark F. Brown was first elected in 1995 to the first Tribal Council following the Mohegan Tribe's federal recognition. A direct descendant of the renowned Mohegan Chief Matagha and the son of Tribal Nonner Pauline Brown, he was actively involved in the Tribe's efforts to achieve federal recognition, leaving a career in law enforcement to devote himself full-time to the Mohegan people. Brown was Chairman of the Tribal Council from 2000-2005 at a time which saw the completion of the one-billion-dollar Project Sunburst expansion that made Mohegan Sun one of the world's top destination resorts. Brown is the proud father of three sons and resides in Lisbon, Connecticut with his wife Mary.



**William Quidgeon Jr., Councilor.** William Quidgeon, Jr. was first elected to the Tribal Council in 2005 and served as the Council's treasurer from 2005 to 2009. After relocating to Uncasville from upstate New York where he worked as an electrical technician for Amtrak, Quidgeon initially held a management position for the Engineering Department of Mohegan Sun. He later became a Senior Project Manager for the Mohegan Tribal Development Department, where he was responsible for renovations and construction within the casino and for the Tribal government. He also served as the Board Chairman of Mohegan Information Technology Group, a limited liability company. Quidgeon was a member of the Audit Committee for Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment (MGE) from 2005 until 2019 and a member of the Board of Directors for Northeast Wood Products, a venture of Mohegan Holding Company, LLC. He also served as Vice Chairman of the Sachem Fund for economic development in the Tribe's neighboring town of Norwich, CT.



**John G. Harris, Councilor.** John G. Harris is currently serving his first term on Tribal Council. Harris began his professional career as a contractor and small business owner. Later, Harris joined pharmaceutical corporation, Pfizer, serving in a wide variety of managerial operational roles in his over 30-year career there. After leaving Pfizer, he started with Mohegan Sun in 2013 as the Engineering Grounds Supervisor, where he oversaw the daily operations of the grounds team, achieving a 60% reduction in operational costs in his final fiscal year. Harris has been active for many years with both his local and Tribal community, serving the Tribe as the Chairman for the Mohegan Tribal Housing Authority for nearly 25 years, his community as a Site Operations Director for the Preston Redevelopment Agency for the last 10 years and as the Chairman of the Preston Housing Authority from 2007 to 2017. He currently resides in Preston, Connecticut with his wife, Cindy and is the proud father to one daughter, two stepchildren and grandfather to two grandchildren.



**Kenneth Davison, Councilor.** Kenneth Davison is currently serving his first full term on the Tribal Council. Davison has been a lawyer focusing on consumer law. He also has a background in Finance, previously serving as a Finance and Logistics Manager for Afghanistan at the HALO Trust and as an independent Finance Consultant. Davison has a law degree from Arizona Summit Law School and a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Connecticut. Davison is also a retired officer for the United States Army Reserve and Connecticut National Guard. Davison currently resides in Uncasville, CT.

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Each member of the Tribal Council also serves as a member of the Management Board of Mohegan (corporate).