WILMA MANKILLER

Many people in our history are Native American men who were brave leaders. And many of those leaders were also women. One leader of her people was Wilma Mankiller, Chief of the Cherokee Nation.

Wilma grew up in a big family of eleven children. Her father was a Cherokee who had been given lands near Rocky Mountain, Oklahoma. But the government needed the land for a new army fort. So the family moved away to a new home in California.

Wilma would return to Oklahoma many years later to help her Cherokee people. She helped her people to build their own businesses. She worked to bring electricity and running water to small communities who had none.

Her tribe saw her leadership and chose her to be its Chief. Wilma was the first woman to become chief of the Cherokee tribe in 1987. Our president also saw her leadership and gave her the Medal of Freedom. This is the highest award that a citizen can receive.

When she died, President Obama said, “Wilma Mankiller brought a brighter future for all Americans. We should carry on her work.”

1. Wilma Mankiller was chief of what tribe?

2. What kinds of things did Wilma do for her tribe?

3. What did President Obama mean when he said “We should carry on her work?”