



The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



The 21st Navajo Nation Council helped make the Navajo Code Talker monument a reality on Thursday, Feb. 28 at the Arizona State Capitol. The Council appropriated \$200,000, which paid for the construction of the monument. Pictured is Navajo Council Delegate Young Jeff Tom standing in front of the monument. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)

Navajo Council helped make Code Talker Monument a reality

\$200,000 appropriation paid for monument at state capitol

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The official unveiling of the Navajo Code Talker Monument last week in Phoenix would not have been possible without the help of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, which appropriated \$200,000 towards the project.

Council Delegate Young Jeff Tom (Mariano Lake/Smith Lake) explained that the monument and the appropriation was a lengthy and slow process.

The legislation was sponsored by the Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan (Iyanbito/Pinedale), which authorized the reallocation and disbursement of funds to the Code Talkers Memorial Foundation. The legislation was co-sponsored by Young Jeff Tom as well.

As the public gathered to finally see the bronze sculpture designed by Navajo-Ute sculptor Orelan C. Joe of Kirtland, N.M., on Thursday, Feb. 28 at the Arizona State Capitol, it was a poignant moment for Council Delegate Young Jeff Tom.

The \$200,000 statue honoring the Navajo Code Talkers was built entirely with funds allocated from the passage of this bill, along with pennies donated by school children across the Navajo Nation.

Yet, what most people didn't know last Thursday was despite the generosity of the children, it took the passage of Legislation No. 0684-07 to get the project completed.

Four months ago when the funds were officially allocated with the unanimous approval of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee (IGR), the hard work had already begun years earlier.

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In the spring of 2004, sculptor Joe had already started working on the clay statue that has eight bronze plaques that are attached to the monument. The plaques will include the names of approximately 429 Navajo Code Talkers.

As directed by the 21st Navajo Nation Council, the Office of the Speaker had been working to insure that this project is completed. The Office of the Speaker, through the direction of Speaker Morgan, has been persistently working with Sylvia Laughter of the Navajo Code Talkers Memorial Foundation to solidify funding appropriations for the monument.

While Speaker Morgan was unable to attend the event last week, his support and strong record of advocating for the veterans was noted in an earlier press release last fall. Speaker Morgan said that he wholeheartedly supports the contributions that our Navajo people provided during World War II (WWII).

“We need to make sure to educate all people about the contributions of our Native American warriors to this country,” he said.

Speaker Morgan explained that Navajo people come from a long line of warriors and he said that Native American soldiers constitute the highest number in per capita serving in the U.S. military forces all over the world. “It is for this very reason that I supported this legislation to fund the Navajo Code Talkers Memorial.”

Sylvia Laughter, founder and board member of the Navajo Nation Code Talkers Memorial Foundation, also expressed her appreciation on behalf of the Foundation immediately as speakers shared their thoughts last week in Phoenix.

“There are so many people to thank and this could not have been possible without the support of the Navajo Nation Council and Speaker Morgan and council delegate Young Jeff Tom.”

Laughter then asked all the Navajo Council Delegates present to stand up for recognition, because they were the ones to provide the support that made the construction of the monument possible.

For more information, contact Joshua Lavar Butler with the Office of the Speaker at 928-871-6384.

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