



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Navajo Nation Council members honor Tom LaPahe in building dedication ceremony**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – In a building dedication ceremony held early Wednesday morning the newly renovated Council Delegates Office was blessed and renamed to honor a former long-standing council delegate who passed away last year. The structure is now designated as the Tom LaPahe Building.

Approximately seventy people witnessed the dedication ceremony, which included the family of the late Tom LaPahe, Navajo legislative branch staff, and President Ben Shelly.

Among the council delegates in attendance were Lorenzo Bates, Dwight Witherspoon, Duane Tsinigine, and Katherine Benally. Former council delegates, Samuel Yazzie and Larry Noble, were also present.

In his morning address, Speaker Johnny Naize shared a distinct leadership trait for which LaPahe was known.

“When he spoke, he would stand up to speak. That’s how he led the Navajo Nation Council,” Speaker Naize said.

In doing so, LaPahe commanded respect and captured the attention of those who he addressed, whether on or off the Council Chambers floor, recalled Speaker Naize and other leaders.

LaPahe was recognized for that characteristic so much in fact that the phrase, “Stand Up and Lead,” was chosen to be engraved on the building’s outer sign, which also bears mention to his years of service to the nation.

From 1985 to 2011, LaPahe represented Tachee/Blue Gap and Whippoorwill Chapters, working tirelessly to foster development and improvements in those communities over the course of his service.

“It makes me happy to have this facility honor his communities, his legacy, his family, and his contributions to this nation through this dedication. He was a leader among leaders,” noted Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon.

Following the unveiling of the new sign outside the building, members of the LaPahe family were the first individuals to stream inside to view the interior restorations.

LaPahe’s youngest son, Johansen, thanked leaders and legislative staff for remembering and honoring his father.

“Today, no doubt, the spirit of our father is here with us. The sun shines with happiness – it’s a new day,” Johansen LaPahe said.

Though President Shelly arrived late, he told the audience that when he heard news that the dedication ceremony was underway, he could not resist walking over.

The president remembered LaPahe as a “very sharp guy,” and stated that when LaPahe spoke, “he stood up for a reason – to be heard.”

The Tom LaPahe building houses four work stations, a small conference room, a lounge area, and work space for the Office of Legislative Services staff.

While the general layout of the building remains the same, the installation of wood laminate flooring and the removal of wood paneling were among the more substantial changes.

The building was in need of renovation for years, noted former delegate Larry Noble in his short speech earlier that morning.

“Thank you, Speaker Naize and staff for making this happen,” Noble said.

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