



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25, 2012

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jerome Clark | 928.637.5603
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Speaker Johnny Naize, Navajo Council extend condolences to family of Navajo Codetalker Frank Chee Willetto

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Speaker Johnny Naize and the 22nd Navajo Nation Council extend their deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones of Frank Chee Willetto, a Navajo Code Talker and former Navajo Nation Vice President, who died at his home in Pueblo Pintado, N.M., on June 23.

“Our nation has lost an honorable Navajo leader and protector with the passing of Frank Chee Willetto, and we are greatly saddened by our loss. His love for the Navajo people was exemplified by his lifelong commitment to public service, and we are grateful for his dedication and personal sacrifices,” Speaker Naize said.

Born on June 6, 1925 in Crownpoint, N.M., Willetto was 87 years old when he died.

As a young man, Willetto enlisted in the U.S. Marines 6th Division in 1944. Upon completion of Navajo code training, he became a Code Talker. As such, Willetto was one of a small number of Navajos who were instrumental in the victory of World War II.

Post-war, the young marine returned to the reservation, continuing a life of service to his people.

In his many public duty roles, Willetto was a Navajo Nation councilman, chapter president in the community of Pueblo Pintado, Navajo Nation Supreme Court Justice, and Vice President of the Navajo Nation under the Milton Bluehouse, Sr. administration.

“The departure of Frank Chee Willetto is a tremendous loss to the Navajo Nation,” said Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels), “On behalf of the Health Education and Human Services Committee, we send our prayers and condolences to the family and to all veterans of the Navajo Nation.”

President Ben Shelly has ordered for the Navajo Nation flag to be flown at half-staff from June 25 through sundown on June 28.

Information regarding the funeral services has yet to be announced.

###