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President Shelly Grateful for Code Talker's Service

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly delivered a commanding statement of gratitude in a keynote address during a memorial service for Navajo Code Talker Keith Little.

“You are here because of the Navajo language, because of the Navajo Code Talkers. If it wasn't for these guys, we wouldn't be here,” the President said.

President Shelly was one about a half dozen people who offered words of condolences at the Window Rock Sports Center Friday afternoon, while others sang songs offering prayer. About 150 people attended the hour and half long ceremony.



President Ben Shelly hands Nellie Little, Keith Little's wife, a Navajo Nation Flag. The memorial service for Keith Little was held in the Window Rock Sports Center Friday afternoon. About 150 people attended the service.

Navajo Code Talkers were dressed in their finest to honor Code Talker Little. They wore their Navajo style gold velveteen shirts. Other veterans from various military branches were clad in military attire and adorned with clothing from their veteran based organizations.

All were in attendance to honor Code Talker Little as one of the leading visionaries for the Navajo Code Talkers Association and the Navajo Code Talkers Foundation. The foundation had been working for the past several years to raise money to build a Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veterans Center, which is planned to be built a couple miles outside of Window Rock.



Eddie Little (left) consoles his mother, Nellie, after she received a Navajo Nation Flag from President Shelly.

When Code Talker Little spoke about fundraising for the museum, he was often remembered for saying that the museum could be built if every American donated one dollar. President Shelly reiterated that statement.

“Let’s do our part,” President Shelly urged the attendees. His statement was met with applause.

Navajo Code Talker Samuel Tso delivered the opening remarks.

“He will live with us forever,” Code Talker Tso said his comrade.

He added that both he and Code Talker Little were in Iwo Jima in 1945, but he didn’t meet Little until after the war.

President Shelly opened his remarks about Code Talker Little with a story about some of their travels during their friendship. This story took place during a parade in New York.

President Shelly said he was talking with Code Talker Little and about how cold the air was. Then someone gave them a blanket to stay warm.

“I still have that blanket that we were given,” President Shelly said. “I will keep it forever.”

Funeral services for Code Talker Little are scheduled for 10 a.m. at the Assembly of God Church in Fort Defiance, Ariz. on Saturday with the burial following in Crystal, N.M.

The family asked that in lieu of flowers,

donations be made in Code Talker Little’s honor to the National Navajo Code Talker Museum and Veterans Center fund at www.navajocodetalkers.org or contact Wynette Arviso at (505) 870-9167 or by email at wynette@navajocodetalkers.org.



Code Talker Keith Little was a leading force in raising money for the Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veterans Center. He was often remembered in stating that if every American gave a dollar for the museum, it would be built.

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