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## **Navajo President Shelly Commemorates Fallen Code Talker and Calls for Navajo Flag at Half Staff**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has ordered the Navajo Nation flag be flown at half staff in honor of former Navajo Nation Vice President and Navajo Code Talker Frank Chee Willetto who died on Saturday.

The Navajo Nation flag has been order to fly at half staff from Monday June 25 through sundown Thursday June 28.

“I am saddened that we lost Frank Chee Willetto. His served his country and returned home and served his people in many ways. His life is an example of how to help people continuously until his last days. The Navajo Nation’s prayers and condolences are with the family of Mr. Willetto,” President Shelly said.



Willetto, 87, passed away early Saturday morning in his home in Pueblo Pintado, N.M. He was born on June 6, 1925 in Crownpoint, N.M.

Willetto was vice president of the Navajo Nation under the Milton Bluehouse administration.

Willetto’s career of public service began when he enlisted with the U.S. Marines 6<sup>th</sup> Division in 1944 where he completed Code Talker training classes. He then served in the Pacific Theater in Saipan and Okinawa.

After World War II, he returned back the reservation and began working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs roads department from 1946 to 1974.

In 1974, Code Talker Willetto was elected as a tribal Councilman and served his people in that role until 1986 when he was elected president of Pueblo Pintado Chapter.

Willetto also served on many boards throughout his career and was also a Navajo Nation Supreme Court Justice.

For his service as a Navajo Code Talker, Willetto received the Congressional Silver Medal in 2001.

“Mr. Willetto never stopped trying to make the Navajo Nation better. His presence and his leadership will be greatly missed,” President Shelly said.

Funeral services are pending.

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