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CREATOR OF THE GREAT NAVAJO NATION SEAL, JOHN CLAW JR. PASSES ON AT AGE 82

The Navajo Nation lost a historical figure today in the passing of John Claw, Jr., creator of the iconic Navajo Nation Seal. The Office of the Navajo Nation President and Vice President is deeply saddened to hear of Claw's passing as his contribution to the Nation's identity is unequivocal.

"The Great Seal of the Navajo Nation represents our Nation in one simple, thoughtful emblem. It signifies the essential core of Navajo life, culture and teachings and is identifiable far beyond the reaches of the United States," President Russell Begaye said. "Today, in hearing of the passing of John Claw, Jr., our nation mourns a great loss. But Claw's legacy will extend far into the future of our tribe."

According to Claw's daughter, Eulalia Claw, her father passed away on the morning of Thursday, Mar. 9 at approximately 6:15 a.m. Eulalia said her father was taken to the emergency room at Gallup Indian Medical Center for complications stemming from heart related conditions. He passed away soon after.

In 1935, Claw was born to Lula and John C. Claw, Sr. His mother was from Dennehotso and his father from Many Farms. He was Bit'ahnii (Folded Arms People) born for Naakaii Dine' (Mexican Clan). He was 82 years old when he passed.

Claw is survived by 11 children, 33 grandchildren, and 16 great grandchildren. He has one surviving sister, Katherine Bia.

In 1952, while attending Ganado High School, Claw entered a competition to design the Navajo Nation Seal. His design incorporated arrowheads, a rainbow, cornstalks, the Four Sacred Mountains and livestock. His design won the competition and became the official seal.

The Great Seal of the Navajo Nation has fifty arrowheads symbolizing the Navajo Nation's protection within the fifty states. The opening at the top represents the easterly direction. The circular rainbow represents Navajo Nation's sovereignty and as such the rainbow never closes on the Nation's sovereignty. The sun is portrayed to shine from the east onto the four sacred mountains; Tsisnaasjini' - Mt. Blanca, Tsoodzil - Mt. Taylor, Doko'oosliid - San Francisco Peak, and Dibé Nitsaa - Mt. Hesperus.

"Our family is continually honored to share the legacy of my father in creating the Great Seal of the Navajo Nation. Where ever we



Navajo Tribal Chairman Sam Akeah shakes hands with a young John Claw Jr., in 1952 when his design became the Official Seal of the Navajo Nation.

go, we hear so many positive things about it," Eulalia Claw said. "He was known throughout the U.S. and beyond to many other countries."

"When President Begaye and I meet with state and national legislators, we always establish the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation. This, in turn, establishes the nation-to-nation relationship that exists between the Navajo Nation and Federal Government. This principal of sovereignty surrounds the Four Sacred Mountains and is protected by the arrowheads on the Seal," Vice President Jonathan Nez said. "The ideology that Claw incorporated into the Seal conveys strength, dignity and above all sovereignty. The Seal holds great power as does the Nation."

In affording great respect to the John Claw, Jr., OPVP calls upon the Navajo Nation to lift his family in prayer during their time of loss. President Begaye and Vice President Nez extend their sincerest condolences to the family at this time.

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