



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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25th Navajo Nation Council honors the life of Caleb Roanhorse



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, Speaker Crystalyne Curley offers condolences to the family of Caleb Roanhorse, who served key roles in the Navajo Nation education system and government development. Roanhorse passed away on Feb. 25, 2023, at the age of 72.

"I am very saddened to learn about the passing of Mr. Caleb Roanhorse. This is a tremendous loss for the family, relatives, friends, and mostly the communities he served. I send my condolence and sympathies to his wife, children, and extended family. He was very personable, with an extraordinary sense of humor. and full of life. He was caring, charming and charismatic. He enjoyed visiting with friends and family and loved to joke. Mr. Roanhorse was a great leader and a pillar to our communities. May his family, colleagues, and community take comfort in knowing that he is now with our Creator," said Speaker Curley (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain).

Roanhorse was from Navajo Station, Ariz. He was Tótsohnii (Big Water Clan) and was born for Tsi'naajinii (Black Streaked Wood Clan). His maternal grandfather was Áshjhhí (Salt Clan), and his paternal grandfather was Táchii'nii (Red Running Into the-Water Clan). He was known by family and friends as "CR." He graduated from the University of Arizona with a bachelor's degree in education, went on to earn a Masters in Education from Northern Arizona University, and obtained a post-graduate certificate in Education Administration from Western New Mexico University.

In his lifetime, Roanhorse held vital roles in education and government through numerous Navajo Nation administrations. While working for the Navajo people, he served in leadership positions for former Navajo Nation Chairman Peter MacDonald and the Navajo Nation Council. He served as the Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director, Division of Education Executive Director, Navajo Government Development Office Executive Director, Legislative Advisor with the Office of Legislative Services, and Executive Staff Assistant to Chairman MacDonald. He also helped establish the Nation's first Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program and served on the National Indian Education Association Executive Board. Roanhorse served as Ganado Unified School District Board President, Cornfields Chapter President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer.

"Sincere condolences to the entire Roanhorse family, relatives, and friends of our Dine leader Mr. Caleb Roanhorse. A great gentleman with a big heart of love, support, and spiritual wisdom cowboy. His leadership for his community and the Navajo Nation is respected and recognized. Cowboy Rides Away with many great memories," said Council Delegate Vince James (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kinlichee, Steamboat).

Working on behalf of the Ganado community, Roanhorse worked with school leadership to secure funding from the State of Arizona and the Navajo Nation to build and construct the Ganado Hornet Pavilion. He believed strongly in carrying forward Navajo traditions and the Navajo language. He was the eldest of 12 children and grew up on the Roanhorse family ranch, where he learned how to care for and manage livestock. He loved riding horses, calf roping, and traveling and served as President of the Dinéland Senior Rodeo Association.

Former Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim stated, "Mr. Caleb Roanhorse was a man of honor and respect. He knew what was meant by sacrifice for the greatness of people. He helped me in many ways without asking for extra pay or other compensation. He simply did the extra work to help those in need. We certainly will miss his gentle and kindhearted leadership. He was a decent person with compassion for all."

He was preceded in death by his parents, Mary Helen Roanhorse and Anselm Roanhorse, Sr., and his brothers, Clarence Roanhorse, Merle Roanhorse, and Robert Roanhorse. He is survived by his wife, Bertha Aguirre, and children, Sharilyn Roanhorse-Aguilar and son-in-law Terry Aguilan, Shane Roanhorse, Sherrick Roanhorse, and Kylie Roanhorse, and granddaughters Taelor Aguilan and Taryn Aguilan.

A graveside service will be held at 10:00 am on March 1, 2023, at Sunset Memorial, 3599 West Historic Highway 66, in Gallup, N.M. Following the service, a reception will be held at the Gallup Community Service Center, 410 Bataan Veterans Ct, Gallup, New Mexico.

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