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THE NAVAJO NATION

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Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr. expresses condolences to the family of the late Navajo Chief Justice Virgil L. Kirk, Sr.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., was informed Wednesday that former Navajo Nation Chief Justice Virgil Lee Kirk died Nov. 30 at the San Juan Regional Medical Center. He was 82.

"It's sad that some of our elders who have made very significant contributions to our way of life, to the budding of our nation's government, pass on, like the late Chief Justice Virgil Kirk, Sr.," the President said. "It's all because of the major contributions from people like the late Chief Justice Virgil Kirk, Sr., that we are known as the great Navajo Nation. Certainly, he will surely be missed."

Following a 10-year career as a Navajo police officer, Chief Justice Kirk began his judicial career with his appointment as a district court judge in 1960. He was nominated to the bench by the late Dr. Annie Dodge Wauneka.

From 1970 until 1978, he served as Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, according to his family. He also served as president of the National Indian Court Judges Association during that time.

From 1986 to 1990, he was a Navajo Nation Council delegate representing the Shiprock Chapter. He also served as a peacemaker and on school boards.

Chief Justice Kirk was *Tachine*, born for *Ta'neesahnii*. His paternal grandfather's clan was *Hashk'aanhadzohi* and his nali was *Deeshchii'nii*.

He is survived by his wife Nellie Leuppe Kirk and his son Virgil Kirk, Jr., both of Shiprock, N.M.

The funeral for the late Chief Justice Virgil Kirk, Sr., is tentatively scheduled for 10 a.m. Dec. 7 at Christ The King Church in Shiprock.

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