

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NAVAJO NATION PRESIDENT JOE SHIRLEY, JR., TO RECEIVE
HONORARY DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS FROM NAU

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree next Friday during Northern Arizona University's fall 2005 commencement ceremonies, becoming the first sitting Navajo president to receive such an honor.

The President, who made education the top priority of the Shirley/Dayish Administration, will also address the more than 2,100 graduates. The ceremonies will be at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Dec. 16 in the J. Walkup Skydome in Flagstaff.

"I appreciate the Board of Regents and Dr. (John) Haeger for this," President Shirley said. "It holds a special meaning for me because my late daughter, Tona Vee Shirley-Paymella, graduated from NAU with a bachelor's degree in 1998 and she was working on her master's degree at the time she was killed by a drunk driver two days after Thanksgiving Day 2001."

The graduation will be webcast live.
Look for the link at www.nau.edu/registrar/graduation/

The President said that as an elected official, he does not look for rewards or recognition. However, when one like this is presented, it is greatly appreciated.

"I've always been in it to help," he said. "When an honor like the conference of the honorary doctorate is presented, it is appreciated. It is very sweet and I can't help but gain strength from it."

He said that as a leader, he appreciates that others acknowledge the efforts made by elected officials.

"Elective office comes with its own awards," he said. "It's not all a thankless position," he said. "There are people out there who appreciate what an elected official does."

"There is leadership out there who appreciate what I've done and what I'm doing now," President Shirley said. "It gives me a very positive outlook on the future. I continue to want to serve. And do it even bigger and better."

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MORE INFO, TO WATCH LIVE VIA INTERNET

<http://www.nau.edu/registrar/graduation/>

HI RES PHOTO AVAILABLE OF MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING POSTER
FEATURING PRESIDENT SHIRLEY

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