23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
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Navajo Nation Council recognizes Grandma Thora Yazzie

Photo: Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown presented an honorary award to Grandma Thora Yazzie, a longtime advocate for the promotion of traditional Navajo knowledge, language, and lifeways, on Oct. 18, 2016 during the Fall Council Session.

WINDOW ROCK – On the second day of the Fall Council Session, Council Delegate Nathanial Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) invited Grandma Thora Yazzie of Denehotso, to be recognized on behalf of Navajo Nation grandmothers and her service to the Navajo people, by the 23rd Navajo Nation Council.

Delegate Brown said that every Navajo community is "lucky" to have grandmothers like Yazzie, who hold vast amounts of knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation.

"She probably has multiple Ph.D.'s. She knows how to butcher, is an herbalist, and many multiple disciplines of Navajo subjects are in this young lady. Some of us only attain bachelors, masters, or

a PH.D., but our elders, they're full of knowledge – they are astrologists, medicine women, and medicine men," said Delegate Brown.

He added that Navajo grandparents are the "silent protectors" that pray for the Navajo people, the land, and over sacred places that give strength to Diné Citizens. It is important to recognize all Navajo grandmothers, not just Thora Yazzie, however, she represents them and the precious knowledge they hold, and the love they have for the Navajo Nation, said Delegate Brown.

Yazzie, who is originally from Dennehotso, thanked students from the Naschitti Elementary School who performed songs and a puppet show earlier that morning in the Navajo language, saying that as an elder she felt it is important for grandparents to advocate to younger generations to learn Navajo cultural ways and language.

"I am very thankful for our youth. They are our future and it makes me happy hearing them speak and living our culture. I am glad they are speaking the language, because it tells us how we should be living our Navajo traditions. Many young people do not speak Navajo, but it is good to hear them talking in the Navajo language," said Yazzie.

Yazzie stressed the importance of Navajo veterans, who she said protects the Nation and in history, utilized the Navajo language to win World War II. She added that Navajo people should be proud of their heritage and language, and that she would continue to pass on her traditional knowledge to younger generations.

Delegate Brown presented a plaque from the Council, explaining that her service to the Navajo people will be remembered, and that she represents grandmothers of the Navajo Nation who work to educate Diné Citizens on the Navajo way of life.

"On behalf of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council, we extend our gratitude and appreciation to Shimásání, Thora Yazzie, in recognition of your lifetime service as a community advocate, an outstanding educator for our Navajo children, and a loving grandmother for the community of Denehotso and the Navajo Nation. We appreciate your endeavors that benefit the people of the Navajo Nation through the countless years of your teachings, compassion, and love. We thank you for your service," said Delegate Brown.

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