



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 19, 2020

**Flags to be flown at half-staff in honor of
Navajo leader and veteran Earnest C. Becenti, Sr.**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued a proclamation that calls for flags on the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff on Aug. 19, in honor and memory of Earnest C. Becenti, Sr., who passed away on Aug. 16.

“As we mourn the loss of Earnest C. Becenti, Sr., we also honor and remember all his great sacrifices and services he provided for his Navajo people. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, and colleagues as they lay him to rest today,” said President Nez.

Earnest was born on March 9, 1925, and a community member of Church Rock, N.M. He was married for 69 years to his wife, Mary Becenti, who passed in 2016.

Earnest enlisted with the U.S. Army on Aug. 11, 1943, and was honorably discharged on Nov. 28, 1945 with two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. After his service, he returned to the Navajo Nation where he served as a Chapter Official for 33 years, an Eastern Navajo Agency Council President for 23 years, a McKinley County School Board member for 27 years, a McKinley County Commissioner for 16 years, a New Mexico Mounted Patrol for 14 years, and was a traditional medicine man for over 56 years. Earnest also retired after 37 years of federal service.



PHOTO: The late Earnest C. Becenti, Sr.

“We thank God for the life of Earnest C. Becenti, Sr. In every aspect of his life, he was a loving and compassionate person who cared greatly for his people. We ask all of our Navajo people to keep his spirit and family in your prayers,” said Vice President Lizer.

Survivors include his children, Earnest Becenti, Jr., Helena Becenti, and Julia Cooke, eight grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren.

The funeral service for Earnest C. Becenti, Sr. will take place on Wednesday, Aug. 19, at 10:00 a.m. at Gallup Veteran Cemetery in Gallup, N.M.

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THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF NAVAJO LEADER AND VETERAN EARNEST C. BECENTI, SR.

THE NAVAJO NATION honors Earnest C. Becenti, Sr. of Church Rock, New Mexico for his leadership and service to the Navajo Nation:

WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation is greatly saddened by the loss of Earnest C. Becenti, Sr. a former Chapter Official for 33 years, an Eastern Navajo Agency Council President for 23 years, a McKinley County School Board member for 27 years, a McKinley County Commissioner for 16 years, a New Mexico Mounted Patrol for 14 years; and

WHEREAS, Earnest C. Becenti, Sr. served our country in the United States Army from August 11, 1943 to November 28, 1945; and

WHEREAS, he returned to the Navajo Nation following his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army to support his family for over 37 years; and

WHEREAS, Earnest C. Becenti, Sr. was a respected hataalii providing a valuable contribution to carry on the history and culture of the Diné; his knowledge of Diné songs and prayers is irreplaceable and will be sorely missed; and

WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation offers its prayers and condolences to his family, friends, and community.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jonathan Nez, President of the Navajo Nation, and **I, Myron Lizer**, Vice President of the Navajo Nation, do hereby proclaim that all flags on the Navajo Nation shall be flown at half-staff on August 19, 2020, to honor the memory and service of the late Earnest C. Becenti, Sr.

ORDERED THIS 19th DAY OF AUGUST 2020


Jonathan Nez, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION


Myron Lizer, *Vice President*
THE NAVAJO NATION