



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:
Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 2021

**President Nez and Vice President Lizer offer condolences
to the family of former Navajo Nation President Kelsey Begaye**

.WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer are saddened to learn of the loss of former Navajo Nation President Kelsey Begaye, who passed away due to natural causes on Friday, Aug. 13 in Flagstaff, Ariz., at the age of 70.

“My wife Phefelia and I offer our condolences and prayers for President Kelsey Begaye’s family. To his wife Marie and their children, we pray that you take comfort in knowing that your husband and father is now with God. Mr. Begaye was a very humble and loving person, who overcame adversities at a young age and turned to his faith to become a loving family man, a Vietnam veteran, and a great leader for his people. Throughout his lifetime, he drew his strength and determination from his faith and gave back so much to our Navajo people. He will be greatly missed,” said President Nez.



Begaye was born on Jan. 7, 1951 in Kaibeto, Ariz. He was Tódich’ii’nii and born for Tl’ízí lání. Prior to his public service, Begaye served in the Vietnam War as a member of the United States Army. He later became a substance abuse counselor, helping many young people to overcome drug and alcohol abuse.

Prior to being elected President, he also served as a local school board member, President and Secretary/Treasurer for Kaibeto Chapter, and two-terms as the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council. He served as the President of the Navajo Nation from 1999-2003 with former Vice President Taylor McKenzie, M.D.

“My family and I offer our thoughts and prayers to Mr. Begaye’s wife, Marie, their children and grandchildren. He was a person of great faith who helped many others throughout his lifetime. Our Nation is stronger and more prosperous because of his service and great leadership. He leaves behind a great legacy built on humility, service, and faith. Our thoughts are with his loved ones at this time,” said Vice President Lizer.

Kelsey Begaye is survived by his wife, Marie Begaye, and five children. Their eldest son passed away in 2014. President Nez and Vice President Lizer call for all flags on the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff. A proclamation will be issued once details of the service are finalized. The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President continues to offer support to the family.

###

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.