By Naomi Chan

Sun Correspondent

The national, state and POW-MIA flags stood at half-mast today at the McKinley County Sheriff's office, in honor of slain Navajo Police Department Officer Houston James Largo.

Prior to Monday night's vigil for the fallen officer, McKinley County Under Sheriff Paul Lucero said, "Our condolences to his family. He was definitely a good officer and will be missed. Everyone is very sad here."

MCSO deputies assisted NPD officers in apprehending shooting suspect Kirby Cleveland on Sunday, according to media reports.

Earlier Monday, in symbolic gesture, local law enforcement escorted the body in to the borders of the city to Rollie's Mortuary. Largo's career spanned several years with the Gallup Police Department prior to his joining the NPD. He lived in Thoreau and served the Crownpoint district. He was 27.

Neon blue skies streaked with pink canopied the large gathering of about 100 people who had arrived early to the vigil. Twenty minutes later the crowd had swelled to about 200.

Everett Jim spoke to the gathered crowd holding their bright candles in the darkness. He said that he was a friend of Largo's before he was an officer.

"He was a really smart guy," he said. "We were the original geek squad. No matter what, he brought laughter to our group. He could have been anything, like, an engineer or a scientist, but he took the humble path and became a warrior."

Gallup Police Chief Phillip Hart thanked the community for showing up. Over 300 people were in attendance, and they ran out of candles early in the evening before the event started. Officers rushed out to find and purchase more, as many as they could, for the crowd.

"It's times like this that keep us going to work everyday," Hart said. "We thank you for your support."

Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez gave a long speech, in Navajo, and then in English, to the quiet, somber, crowd.

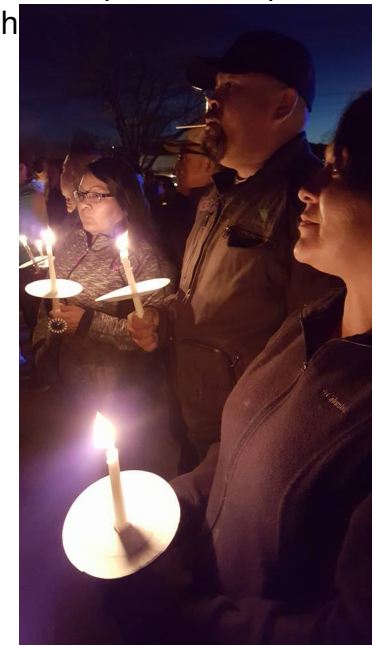
"I appreciate the chief and the Gallup Police Department for hosting this vigil tonight, the McKinley County Sheriff's Department for their support, and let's not forget our first responders, firefighters, EMT's and all the people of Gallup and these surrounding areas," he said. "Whenever we're in danger, we're all one big family. We appreciate the donations you've given

to the family, his parents, siblings, and the children. We mourn and our heart is broken for you. The entire Navajo Nation's heart is broken for you. We need to instill respect for authority among our children."

Sheriff Ron Silversmith of the McKinley County Sheriff's Department, who spent 30 years with the GPD, said, "He paid the ultimate sacrifice. He loved what he did. When I got the call and had to drive out there, it was horrible. When I got out there and found out that it was him, it was even worse."

He continued, "If you have a police officer in your family, give them a hug and thank them, knowing what they have to go through out there and face to protect our community. Every once in awhile if you see an officer, just smile and wave at them or say hello. They appreciate that and it keeps them going. They're there for you and your protection."

Officer Chaplain Mike Kleeberger of the Gallup Police Department lead a closing prayer with a reading from Psalms. After the prayer, h



ugs were exchanged, and donations were accepted for the family. Anyone who wishes to

assist the family of the fallen officer is asked to reach out to the Gallup Police Department, 451 Boardman Dr, Gallup, NM 87301 or call (505) 863-9365.