

Navajo leader, veteran Earnest C. Becenti, Sr. honored

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Flags were flown at half staff

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued a proclamation calling for flags on the Nation to be flown at half-staff Aug. 19, in honor and memory of Earnest C. Becenti, Sr., who died 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 [Aug. 19],” Nez said.

Earnest was born on March 9, 1925, and was 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.

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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, part of the 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.

“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,” Lizer said.

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 took place on Aug. 19, at 10:00 am at Gallup Veterans Cemetery.