

Navajo Nation honors Sen. John McCain

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PHOENIX, Ariz. — On behalf of the Navajo Nation, Pres. Russell Begaye and Vice Pres. Jonathan Nez attended Sen. John McCain’s funeral service at the North Phoenix Baptist Church on Aug. 30, in honor of the ideals he upheld as a veteran and as a statesman.

“Navajos are paying tribute to the legacy of Sen. McCain shoulder-to-shoulder with fellow Americans,” Begaye said. “We had our differences and we shared common goals. In all, he was a respectable man willing to sit down with the Navajo Nation to hear our concerns. He was a man of courage who served the country with valor. Godspeed, Sen. McCain.”

McCain was elected to the House of Representatives in 1982 and to the Senate in 1986. For 60 years, he served the United States of America as a public servant in both Congress and the Navy.

After having been shot down during the Vietnam War, McCain was taken prisoner and

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subjected to torture for five and a half years. Grant Woods, a longtime friend of the senator, gave a tribute at the memorial service recalling a story told to him about Hø a Lò Prison. Sen. McCain was bound tightly with his arms behind his back, but a Vietnamese guard came to him around midnight and loosened the ropes. A few weeks later, Sen. McCain found out why. The guard was standing nearby and with his sandals, wordlessly drew a cross into the sand.

Joining Woods in giving tributes on Aug. 30 were Tommy Espinoza, Larry Fitzgerald and former U.S. Vice Pres. Joe Biden.

Musical performances were given by the Brophy Student Ensemble, Arizona Fire Service Pipes and Drum, and Navajo flutist Jonah Littlesunday.

Sen. McCain ran twice for president. In 2000, he lost the Republican primary to President George W. Bush. In 2008, he lost the general election to President Barack Obama. On Saturday, Sept. 1, both presidents delivered eulogies during the Washington D.C. memorial service for Sen. McCain.

Nez expressed appreciation to McCain for his service throughout Indian Country, especially in regard to the various issues facing the Navajo Nation.

“Sen. McCain, you are a lodestar for the state of Arizona and Republicans around the country for your bipartisanship during a time when political ideologies are tearing the very fabric of our nation,” he said. “We salute you.”

Sen. McCain is survived by his wife Cindy and his children Bridget, Andy, Jimmy, Jack, Doug, Sidney and Meghan.