

White Mountain Apache police officer dies in line of duty

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Navajo Nation pays tribute to David Kellywood

WHITERIVER, Ariz. - Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez joined family members, law enforcement officers across the country, and hundreds of White Mountain Apache tribal members, to honor and remember fallen White Mountain Apache Police Officer David Kellywood during a funeral service held at the Chief Alchesay Activity Center in Whiteriver, Ariz. Feb. 29. At the age of 26, Kellywood lost his life in the line of duty while responding to a call on Feb. 17.

Nez presented a Navajo Nation flag to Kellywood's wife, Kamelia Kellywood, and their two sons David Jr. and Gabriel. The funeral service drew wide support from law enforcement officers from across the country, Canada, and many other tribes. White Mountain Apache Tribal Chairwoman Gwendena Lee-Gatewood, Congress Tom O'Halleran, D-Ariz., Navajo Nation Council Delegate Eugene Tso, and Navajo County Board of Supervisors Dawnafe Whitesinger were among the many leaders in attendance.

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“We grieve with our brothers and sisters from the White Mountain Apache Tribe and we offer our thoughts and prayers for Officer Kellywood’s wife, his sons, fellow officers, and many others who were a part of his life. Officer Kellywood was a young man, but he gave so much of himself to serve and protect all of his people. We will always honor and remember him for everything he offered and for giving his life in the line of duty,” Nez declared.

Kellywood joined the White Mountain Apache Police Department in 2018. He previously served with the Navajo County Sheriff’s Office and with the Arizona Department of Corrections. Following Kellywood’s passing, the Navajo Nation Police Department has assisted in providing public safety coverage and grieving support for the White Mountain Apache Police force.

“The outpouring support from everyone is very much appreciated, humbling, and heartfelt. Ahe’hee to the Navajo Nation for helping us with our officers and first responders, patrolling and dispatching. To President Nez and everything he has done for us, and to everyone that came out. Thank you to all the agencies and entities, for coming together as one and to lay our fallen brother to rest. We will forever remember him and God bless each one of you,” Gatewood said.

During the service, Kellywood was remembered as a kind and generous person who loved his family very much. On Feb. 25, community members came together to hold a candlelight vigil to honor Kellywood and offer their thoughts and prayers to the family.

“The Navajo people are greatly saddened by the loss of Officer Kellywood. To his wife, mother, children, and all of the people of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, we want you to know that you remain in our prayers each day. Please take comfort in knowing that Officer Kellywood is now in the hands of our Creator,” Lizer said in closing.