

Obituary

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 11 March 2022 05:33



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Speaker Seth Damon, and Vice President Myron Lizer offer their condolences to the family of former Tohatchi Red Willow Farm Board President and beloved community leader Dorothy Bitsilly, who passed away on Feb. 23 at the age of 93.

Mrs. Bitsilly is Tábaqhá (Water's Edge Clan), born for Tódich'ii'nii (Bitter Water Clan). Her maternal grandfather was Táchii'nii (Red Running into the Water People Clan) and her paternal grandfather was Naakai dine'é (The Mexican Clan). She is originally from Tohatchi, NM, and born on September 28, 1928.

"We offer condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues," President Jonathan Nez said. "Throughout her lifetime, she lived by the teachings of our elders and demonstrated T'áá Hwó Ají Téego, self-reliance and self-determination ... Dorothy's unyielding advocacy for the Red Willow Farm project serves as an example of what it means to love and serve your community as a resilient Navajo woman."

In her years serving as a farm board president, Mrs. Bitsilly was known for her dedication to the Red Willow Farm project, which supplied a water well and electricity to local farmers. Her advocacy was largely driven by her dream to see the Navajo people achieve food sovereignty from agriculture.

She also served over 30 years as a Bureau of Indian Affairs education liaison, was the Vice President of the Fort Defiance Agency Council on Aging, and the Navajo Nation representative

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to the New Mexico Aging Advisory Policy group.

During her lifetime, Mrs. Bitsilly was recognized as Shí Masani of the Navajo Nation from 2006-2007, received the 2020 Community Lifetime Achievement in Excellence Award, and the 'Farm to Table' 2020 Farmer of the Year honor.

Married 45 years to her husband, the late Guy Bitsilly Sr. she was preceded in death by her son Guy Bitsilly Jr. She is survived by six daughters, including Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne, four sons, her sister Cora Joe, 21 grandchildren, 41 great grandchildren, and 4 great-great grandchildren.

Dorothy Bitsilly will be laid to rest at the Tohatchi Community Cemetery on Wednesday, March 2, 2022. A public viewing will begin from 8:30 am to 9:30 a.m. with a memorial service to follow at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Gallup, NM.

Flower arrangements can be ordered and monetary donations can be sent to the Cope Memorial Mortuary. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the family will also be accepting donations this weekend at Tohatchi NHA Unit No. 12.