



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council mourns passing of retired Navajo Police Lieutenant Bennie Shirley

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The 25th Navajo Nation Council mourns the loss of retired Navajo Police Lieutenant Bennie Shirley of Chinle, Ariz. According to family reports, Shirley passed away on Friday, Aug. 28, at the age of 84.

Shirley served the Navajo Nation Police Department for 43 years as an officer, lieutenant and captain before retiring in 2006.

“Lieutenant Shirley dedicated more than four decades of his life to protecting and serving the Navajo people, a commitment that deserves our deepest respect and gratitude,” said Law and Order Committee Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton. “We honor his legacy and recognize the sacrifices made not only by our officers, but also by the families who stand beside them throughout their service.”



**Lieutenant Bennie Shirley. Photo
courtesy of the Shirley family.**

Shirley was Tó'dich'ii'nii and born for the Ma'ii Deeshgiizhinii clan. He was married to Laverne Shirley, who preceded him in death. Together, they had two sons, Vernon and Vernelle, and five grandchildren.

“He was a great man who dedicated his life to serving and helping others,” said his son Vernelle. “He touched many lives through his years of service, but above all else, his greatest priority was family, especially our mom. His love for her was unwavering. Now, they are together again.”

The 25th Navajo Nation Council extends its heartfelt condolences and prayers to Shirley's family and loved ones during this difficult time. The Council honors his decades of service and joins the Navajo Nation in remembering the sacrifices and dedication of all active, fallen and deceased law enforcement officers.

A memorial service for retired Navajo Police Lt. Bennie Shirley, with Navajo Police Department honors, will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2026, at 10 a.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Chinle. Burial will follow at the Ayze Family Plot, with a reception immediately afterward at the residence of John and Rita Brown. The Navajo Police Department will provide an escort from Green Meadows Mortuary in St. Michaels to the church beginning at 7:30 a.m.

For questions, contact Vernelle Shirley at 505-258-7570.

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