

## A warrior gone, but not forgotten

Written by Naomi Mercedes Chan Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 17 March 2017 08:01

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The national, state and POW-MIA flags stood at half-mast Monday at the McKinley County Sheriff's Office, in honor of slain Navajo Police Department Officer Houston James Largo.

Prior to Monday night's vigil for the fallen officer, McKinley County Under Sheriff Paul Lucero

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said, "Our condolences to his family. He was definitely a good officer and will be missed. Everyone is very sad here."

MCSO deputies assisted NPD officers in apprehending shooting suspect Kirby Cleveland Sunday, according to media reports. Largo passed away from his injuries Sunday afternoon.

Early Monday, local law enforcement escorted the body into the borders of the city to Rollie's Mortuary. Largo's career spanned several years with the the McKinley County Sheriff Office, and the Gallup Police Department prior to his joining the NPD. He served the Crownpoint district. He was 27.

Neon blue skies streaked with pink canopied the large gathering of about 100 people who had arrived early to the 7:30 pm vigil. Twenty minutes later the crowd had swelled to about 200.

One of the training officers at GPD, Andy Yearley, spoke fondly of Largo.

"We're always told to go a mile above and beyond, but went two miles above and beyond," he said. "He always took the time out of his day to help others. If he saw some kids playing basketball he would stop and play basketball with them, knowing that those kids would remember him when they grew up."

Everett Jim spoke to the gathered crowd holding their bright candles in the darkness. He said that he was a friend of Largo's before he was an officer.

"He was a really smart guy," he said. "We were the original geek squad. No matter what, he brought laughter to our group. He could have been anything, like, an engineer or a scientist, but he took the humble path and became a warrior."

Gallup Police Chief Phillip Hart thanked the community for showing up. The crowd grew so big that they ran out of candles early in the evening before the event started. Officers rushed out to

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find and purchase more, as many as they could, for the crowd.

“It’s times like this that keep us going to work everyday,” Hart said. “We thank you for your support.”

Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez gave a long speech, in Navajo, and then in English, to the quiet, somber, crowd.

“I appreciate the chief and the Gallup Police Department for hosting this vigil tonight, the McKinley County Sheriff’s Department for their support, and let’s not forget our first responders, firefighters, EMT’s and all the people of Gallup and these surrounding areas,” he said. “Whenever we’re in danger, we’re all one big family. We appreciate the donations you’ve given to the family, his parents, siblings, and the children. We mourn and our heart is broken for you. The entire Navajo Nation’s heart is broken for you. We need to instill respect for authority among our children.”

Sheriff Ron Silversmith of the McKinley County Sheriff’s Department, who spent 30 years with the GPD, said, “He paid the ultimate sacrifice. He loved what he did. When I got the call and had to drive out there, it was horrible. When I got out there and found out that it was him, it was even worse.”

He continued, “If you have a police officer in your family, give them a hug and thank them, knowing what they have to go through out there and face to protect our community. Every once in awhile if you see an officer, just smile and wave at them or say hello. They appreciate that and it keeps them going. They’re there for you and your protection.”

Officer Chaplain Mike Kleeberger of the Gallup Police Department lead a closing prayer with a reading from Psalms. After the prayer, hugs were exchanged, and donations were accepted for the family.

Anyone who wishes to assist the family of the fallen officer is asked to donate directly to the memorial fund account with Wells Fargo. The account name is Officer Houston J. Largo, the

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number: 7034959507. Gallup Police Department may also be contacted for questions or more information about donating.

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