

## Popular hydrologist dies

Written by gallupsun  
Tuesday, 20 April 2021 11:46

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James Curtis “Jimmy” Shorty, who commanded his water drilling rig and crew from one end of the Navajo Reservation to the other, passed away on April 17. He was 84.

He had earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology from St. Joseph’s College in Indiana, and always said that, having grown up on the reservation, he had a natural instinct for knowing where the best spots to drill a good well might be.

Shorty, whose team had successfully drilled hundreds of water wells on the reservation, was featured in the prize-winning documentary “*The Navajos Water The Desert*,” filmed in the 1960’s by Hollywood’s Hanna Barbera Studios.

Several stories about the making of that film are featured in the book *Tinsel Wilderness*.

In his later years Jim Shorty lived in Albuquerque, where he translated his extensive knowledge of the Navajos living on the reservation into a second career, acting as a bridge between the people he had come to know and finding opportunities for them to prosper in local businesses and corporations.



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