

Former Navajo Nation President Kelsey Begaye dies

Written by Staff Reports
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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – President Kelsey Begaye, Navajo Nation Council Speaker, Navajo Nation President, and a *Naat'áanii*, passed away in Flagstaff, Ariz. Aug. 13 at the age of 70 due to natural causes.

Begaye was born on Jan. 7, 1951 in Kaibeto, Ariz. He was Tódich'ii'nii and born for Tł'ízí lání. Prior to his public service, Begaye served in the Vietnam War as a member of the United States Army. He later became a substance abuse counselor, helping many young people to overcome drug and alcohol abuse.

Prior to being elected President, he also served as a local school board member, President and Secretary/Treasurer for Kaibeto Chapter, and two-terms as the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council. He served as the President of the Navajo Nation from 1999-2003 with former Vice President Taylor McKenzie, M.D.

Kelsey Begaye is survived by his wife, Marie Begaye, and five children. Their eldest son passed away in 2014. President Nez and Vice President Lizer called for all flags on the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff on Aug. 14. A proclamation will be issued once details of the service for Begaye are finalized.

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The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President continues to offer support to the family.