



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Family, Gov. Lujan Grisham, Navajo Nation issue statements on the passing of Sen. John Pinto

SANTA FE — The family of Sen. John Pinto, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon and Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne on Friday issued the following statements upon the passing of the honorable New Mexico state senator.

The family of Sen. John Pinto:

“The family of Senator John D. Pinto is saddened to announce his passing. He passed away the morning of May 24 in Gallup, New Mexico, surrounded by his family. He dedicated his life to public service. He was a Marine, Navajo Code Talker, longtime New Mexico State Senator, and family man. He worked tirelessly throughout his lifetime to serve the Diné people. The family would like to express their gratitude to his constituents and fellow legislators for allowing him to serve, it is what truly made him happy. He was 94 years old.”

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham:

“John Pinto’s towering legacy stretches far beyond the borders of New Mexico, and his loss will be felt across not only this nation but the world. A Marine and Navajo Code Talker, he played a crucial role in winning the Second World War, preserving freedoms for Americans and many more people worldwide. The debt we owe for that service, and the service of all Code Talkers, can never be repaid. A senator for more than 40 years, he represented his constituents with grace, wisdom and tenacity. Through the relationships he built and respect he earned, he was able to secure innumerable crucial investments for New Mexico communities, in particular Native communities. His record of service is unblemished, and his unwavering commitment to his people will forever serve as a shining example. He was a New Mexico icon and an American hero. I will miss his good humor, as will everyone at the Capitol, and I offer my deepest condolences to his loved ones, his family and friends.”

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez:

“On behalf of the Navajo people, we offer our condolences and prayers for the family, friends, colleagues, and many others who had the honor of knowing Sen. John Pinto. Words cannot express the sadness we feel for the loss of a great Diné warrior who served our country as a Navajo Code Talker and in the New Mexico State Senate for many years. He dedicated his life to helping others and he changed the lives of so many people for the better. We will miss his smile, his humor, and his love and compassion for the Navajo people. We will miss hearing and seeing him sing ‘The Potato Song’ that brought smiles to so many faces over the years. On behalf of Vice President Myron Lizer, myself, and our families, we offer our thoughts and condolences. May we take comfort in knowing that Honorable John Pinto is now with our Creator.”

24th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon:

“In a life dedicated to service, Senator Pinto exhibited a compassion and warmth for all whom he touched. While his contributions to the Navajo People and the citizens of New Mexico are too numerous to list, the impact he made in the soul of the Navajo People and New Mexico citizens as a leader will continue for generations. Thank you, Senator Pinto, for your devotion to the betterment of your constituents and the sacrifices you made for your country.”

Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne:

“We have truly lost a legendary man. Senator Pinto was one of the Navajo people’s most honored and respected men, not only in modern times but of all time. His service to our people was unsurpassable having been a Navajo Code Talker and the longest-serving state Senator in New Mexico. A man who fought for his people, his efforts most recently brought state funds to support the building of justice centers for our Navajo Nation. We will continue to reap the benefits of his service through all that he brought to our nation. Our people cannot thank him enough for a lifetime of service. Rest well, Senator Pinto, for you have earned it.”

The governor ordered all state flags to half-staff effective immediately.

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