

Vernon Lewis Ashley, 99

- Nov 12, 2015



Save

Jan. 15, 1916 – Nov. 10, 2015

Vernon Lewis Ashley, 99, passed away peacefully surrounded by loved ones in his own home and in his own bed, the way he wanted on November 10, 2015. All night wake starting at 4:00pm, Monday, November 16 at Trinity Episcopal Church with a 7pm Prayer Service. Services will be at 10:00am, Tuesday, November 17 at Trinity Episcopal Church with burial at Scotty Philip Cemetery

Arrangements have been placed in care of Isburg Funeral Chapel. Online condolences may be made at www.isburgfuneralchapels.com

Vernon whose Indian name is "Sinkpe" meaning muskrat was born on the banks of the Missouri River near Crow Creek District at the mouth of Wolf Creek on January 15, 1916 to Wallace and Elizabeth Ashley and joined a family of 7.

He attended Indian boarding schools at Pierre and later on at Stephan Mission before finishing his 8th grade education at a one-room country school from Wilson School District #7 near his parent's home at Wolf Creek. At that time there were no high schools on the reservation so he attended Flandreau Indian School and graduated in 1935. Vernon served four years from '42-'46 in the Army Air Corp during WWII and also played football for the Army.

After the war, Vernon returned home to Crow Creek to help his mother and in 1946 he was elected as a tribal chairman. Under his leadership, he authored the constitution and by-laws of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe while also being a rancher near his home. He was the oldest member of the Tribe and also the oldest WWII veteran.

In 1951, Vernon married the love of his life, Rose Marie Flynn of Winner, SD, and together they raised 7 children in a marriage that lasted 49 years before her passing in 2000. Under the G.I. Bill, Vernon started college at the age of 34 at Dakota Wesleyan University. He not only studied but played football for the Tigers before graduating in 1954 with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. After Vern's graduation he worked for 3 governments; Tribal, State (worked under 3 Governors) and Federal where he finished his career and retired from public service and enjoyed living in Pierre with his wife, Rose Marie.

Vernon's interests were wide and varied but he has been an advocate for Native people and has stressed education not only in his family but other Natives as a way to succeed in this society. All his children are educated which is being passed to his grandchildren. He has been outspoken on the responsible use of the tribe's resources to better the lives of Crow Creek. He is a veteran and in his family are other veterans who represented US Army, US Air Corp, US Navy and USMC. He started the American Indian Veteran's Association to advocate for our veterans. Vernon has been a lay reader for 40 years in the Episcopal Church and has been a past president of the Brotherhood of Christian Unity (BCU), which was founded in 1873.

On July 25, 2015, the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe honored Vernon by making him Chief of the Tribe and presented him with a War Bonnet.

His surviving children are John Ashley from Chandler, AZ, Mary Ashley from Pierre, Wallace Ashley from Albuquerque, James Ashley from Hickman, NE and Joseph Ashley from Pierre. His grandchildren: Rochelle Lucero, Sydnie Ashley, Jennifer Ashley, Aaron Ashley, Amelia Ashley, Malia Ashley, Aidan Ashley, Adrienne Ashley, Leahandra Freet, Kendra Carper, Kristen Warden, Londelle Ashley, Lacey Ashley and Joseph Robert Ashley and great-grandchildren: Danielle Lucero, Gabrielle Lucero, Wyatt Ashley, Sayra Summers, Jackson Carper, Brady Carper, Elizabeth Carper, Hudson Carper, Liam Warden, Shayla Ashley, and Jaiden Ashley.

Preceding his death were his daughter Janna M., his wife Rose M, his son Robert L. and a granddaughter Sayra Mahto, both his parents and all his siblings of which he was the last surviving member