



Obituary

Born: Tuesday, May 10, 1932

Died: Monday, September 2, 2019

Myrna Mae Williams Tovey Myrna Mae Williams Tovey, “Helxti?úkin”, passed away quietly from a prolonged illness on September 2nd, 2019 in Pendleton, Oregon. She was surrounded by her family. She was 87 years old. Myrna was born to Lucien and Gertrude Williams on May 10th, 1932 at their home at the mouth of Iskuulpa Creek near Gibbon, Oregon, east of Pendleton. She was born of Cayuse and Joseph Band Nez Perce heritage of the Red Elk and Longhair families. She was always fiercely proud of her “up river” rearing. She was baptized at St. Andrew’s Indian Mission with the Christian name of Martha at 5 days old and was a devout Catholic her entire life. She also received her Indian name of Helxti?úkin as a child. It is an old Cayuse name that means “Last one to die.” In 1948, Myrna was proud to be named the Round-Up Indian Princess among other prominent Indian ladies, and was honored to present a blanket to President Harry S Truman at the Round Up that year. Myrna attended school at the one room Gibbon school with her brothers and graduated from St. Joseph’s Academy. She attended and completed her nursing education at St. Anthony’s Nursing Program and Holy Names Academy (now part of Gonzaga University) in Spokane, Washington and worked at Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane, Washington. During a visit with a friend from nursing school in Malad City, Idaho, she met John D. Tovey, Sr. and they were married shortly thereafter. After getting married she worked at Oneida County Hospital in Malad City, Idaho for more than 30 years, first as a nurse and eventually in an administration position. In 1991, she became nursing administrator at the Indian Health Services Clinic at the Shoshone-Bannock Indian Reservation near Pocatello, Idaho. After 50 years as a nurse she retired and returned to Pendleton to be near family. Myrna was a member, volunteer and leader in many organizations such as Idaho American Nurses Association, Ernest W. Jones American Legion Malad City Post 65 Auxiliary, Nez Perce Trail Foundation, Umatilla County Historical Society, Nixyáawii Senior Center, Yellowhawk Community Health Nurse, and many years on Yellowhawk Tribal Health Commission where she was a long time champion of the new Yellowhawk Tribal Health Clinic. Later in life, Myrna got to fulfil a lifelong dream of traveling. A few of her adventures took her to New Zealand, Australia, China, England, Wales, France, Netherlands, Italy, Vatican City, and many others. She is survived by her three sons—John David, Jr. “Dave” (Valorie), William Douglas “Bill” (Vicki), and Allen Joseph “Al” (Wendy) along with her grandson, John David, III “J.D.”. She was also Grandmother to Gary, Eric, and Tony; David; and Jessica, Gavin, Kyle, and Ellynn, as well as many great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her close family

Service Summary

Burial

Recitation of the Rosary

6:00 PM Wed Sep 04, 2019

Burns Mortuary

336 SW Dorion Avenue
Pendleton, Oregon 97801

Funeral Mass

9:00 AM Thu Sep 05, 2019

St. Andrew's Church

48022 St. Andrew's Road
Pendleton, Oregon 97801

Visitation

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM, Mon Sep 09,
2019

Horsley Funeral Home

132 W 300 N
Malad City, Idaho

relatives Fawn (Andrew) Williams, niece; Sharon (Jerry) Weathers, Kay and Chazz Webb, Marie (Atwai Louie, Jr.) Dick, and all their families. She was preceded in death by her husband, John D Tovey, Sr., both parents, and all her siblings.