



Clarence "Jack" Cagey

November 10, 1933 - March 17, 2020

Clarence "Jack" Cagey, age 86, of Bellingham, Washington passed away on Wednesday, March 17, 2020. He was born in Bellingham to Joseph and Agnes Cagey. Jack enlisted in the Air Force on January 5, 1954 serving during the Korean Conflict and was Honorably discharged October 2, 1957.

Clarence continued to preserve Xwlemi culture through song, dance, storytelling and regalia making. He belonged to Setting Sun Dance Group from 1946-1952; Mother Earth Dancers from 1969-1979; Swan Dancers 1980 to present. He taught at Lummi Tribal School Oksale (Cultural Teacher) from 1991-2001 where he taught song, dance and storytelling.

Tribute Wall

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“ *What a beautifully written tribute.*

It is with sadness that I read of this news today, 4 years after Jacks passing. I am honored to have know Jack and to have heard stories from my mother Delilah, who always spoke fondly of him. We loved joining in celebrations with Jack and Beverly when they brought their family down to Oregon for Pow-Wows. Please know you are in my thoughts and prayers Beverly as you walk on without this legendary man.

With heartfelt sympathy,

Allison Delaney

Allison Delaney - February 22, 2024 at 12:00 AM

“ In loving memory of Uncle Jack

Clarence “Jack” Cagey’s dedication to his people has carried forward our shelingen to more than five generations. As a young man, Jack sat many hours with his elders, learning the family songs until every drum beat and word rang true. He first began performing in 1946 with the Setting Sun Dance Group. He later joined the Mother Earth Dancers, singing and dancing at the annual Lummi Stommish Water Festival. He also led the dedication for a mural in downtown Bellingham, which honors and acknowledges Lummi’s claim to the area as part of our traditional territory.

Over the years he served our community in many capacities. As a teacher at the Lummi Nation School, he was able to share his cultural knowledge with our youth. As Director of the Lummi Housing Authority, Jack managed to secure HUD/NAHASDA funds that brought the first tribal housing units to Lummi, providing new homes for families. He was also a loving husband to Beverly, his wife of over 50 years. Together they were the model for healthy marriage. They worked together as a team, and when big decisions had to be made, Jack would say, “Better ask the boss,” nodding to Beverly. They were happy together and it made people want to be a part of what they were doing.

In 1980, Jack and Beverly founded the Swan Dancers with their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and extended family. For the past 39 years, they have performed every year in the local annual Spring parade and have offered support and teachings to young people who are running for the title of Stommish Princess and Warrior in Lummi Nation’s annual pageant.

Jack’s gift of song and pleasant temperament won him invitations to share his songs all over the country. He performed a blanket ceremony at the Gathering of Nations, and he sang for dedications of the memorial totem pole in the Congressional Cemetery, and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania to remember victims of 9/11. Over the years, his rich tenor opened many events, blessed many tables, and celebrated many milestones in our Lummi community.

He gave of his time generously. If you went to visit him, he was always happy to sit with you and listen to whatever was on your

mind. Often, he would share some piece of his knowledge, or he might recount one of the many adventures he and Beverly had over the years, like the time they were asked to sing for president Lyndon B. Johnson, who was not Indian Country's favorite president at the time.

After singing for him, someone tried to tease Jack and Bev saying, "You sang that man a song!?" It was always a priority of Jack's to maintain a positive public image of the Lummi people. Sometimes that meant acting above one's feelings about a person. He understood the importance of relationships and maintaining composure and dignity.

Right now, we are in challenging times, and our youth have been seeking refuge in traditional culture. What Jack provided was a way of bringing people together to celebrate our shelingen; a life raft to carry us through dark times. He taught us how to use our voices and to see each other in happiness. When he sang and the tiniest of the grandchildren danced, he was helping them to lay a foundation of strength with roots deep in our culture, so that when they grew, they would have something unique and wonderful to share with their children; something powerful and substantial to return to for strength.

Over his lifetime, Jack has made a positive and lasting impact. Through his work he has strengthened our community and ensured that the traditions will be carried forward. He will be missed dearly, but in the many gifts he shared, he will always be with us.

Rena - March 21, 2020 at 12:00 AM