

## **McKay, Joseph T. (1935-2008)**

Joseph's brother Harold Ernest Long Standing Bear, Ph. D. (1941-2010) was a Chief of the Blackfeet Nation. Brother Gerald Gray Sr. is a noted Montana educator. Joseph's nephew (Gerald's son), Gerald Gray Jr. is currently Tribal Chairman of the Little Shell Chippewa Tribe of Montana.



LACEY, Wash. - Browning native Joseph T. McKay, 72, of Lacey, Wash., an Army veteran, died from complications from surgery Jan. 27 at his home.

Cremation has taken place and his memorial service is 3 p.m. Saturday at Trinity Lutheran Church in Olympia, Wash.

Survivors include his wife, Elaine of Lacey, whom he married on July 2, 1993; his son, Kerry (Christine Gilmore) McKay of San Diego; his daughter, Annalee McKay (John) Mintz of Oakland, Calif.; a stepdaughter, Wendy Beckler of Friday Harbor, Wash.; brothers Gerald J. Gray Sr. of Albuquerque, N.M., Harold E. Gray of Browning and Darryl M. Gray of Great Falls; a sister, Marilyn F. Gray of Missoula; grandchildren Samuel V. McKay and Tate E. McKay of San Diego and Joaquin E. Mintz of Oakland; and aunt and uncle Margaret McKay LaMorte and Mike LaMorte of Athens, Ga.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Josie McKay Gray; his stepfather, Ernest J. Gray; a sister, Doreen Gray Huffer; and his father, Lummi Oliver. [His mother Josie McKay was born on June 17, 1915. She died in March 1985 at 69 years of age at Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana. She was an enrolled Blackfeet.]

Joe was born July 5, 1935, on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Browning, and was active in football, basketball and track in high school. He was raised in the home of his grandparents, Joseph McKay and Isabel Monroe McKay, in Browning. After graduating from Browning High School, Joe attended the University of Montana in Missoula and graduated with a liberal arts degree.

When Joe entered UM, he was one of only a handful of Native American students attending colleges and universities. He served as a role model for his brothers and sisters and for other Indian students who graduated from high school and wanted to attend colleges throughout Montana. In the 1950s, Indian students were "encouraged" to attend trade schools because it was generally said they were "good with their hands," and not college material.

Upon graduation from the university in June 1959, Joe served in the Army at Lettermen General Hospital from October 1959 to February 1962.

During his working career, Joe was district sales manager for ITT Phillips Drill Co. Inc. in Minneapolis and Los Angeles, operated J.T. McKay Sales Co. in Los Angeles, was a researcher for the Chippewa-Cree Bi-Lingual/Bicultural Curriculum Development Program at Rocky Boy School, and taught school in Red Lake, Minn.

He also served as assistant project director and research consultant for Bear Chief and Associates, a consultant firm owned by his brothers, Harold and Gerald Gray, was a chemical dependency counselor for the Public Health Service in Westminster, Calif., program director for Skokomish Alcohol/Drug Program in Shelton, Wash., a chemical dependency counselor for the Nisqually Drug Program in Olympia, and served as director of Green Hill School Native American Program, Washington State Juvenile Detention Center in Olympia. Prior to his retirement in July 2000, he worked for the Department of Social Health Services, Children's Administration in Centralia, Wash.

Joe earned a number of awards: an outstanding employee award, winter quarter, Region 6 for Washington State Children's Administration; the Presidential Sales Award, Central Division, from ITT Phillips Drill Co.; the Dr. Zuska Scholarship from the University of California-Irvine; a UM tuition scholarship and a Fargo Moorhead College Scholarship in Fargo, N.D. He also received a presidential sales award for his design of a concrete sales training program that was adopted in the home office and implemented throughout the United States, Canada and South America, from ITT Phillips Drill Co.

Some of his volunteer service included serving on the board of directors for Missoula's Indian Alcohol/Drug Prevention Program and the board of directors for Orange County's (Calif.) Alcohol Prevention Programs, volunteering for the Missoula Crisis Center hotline and serving as operations chairman for Capitol Jamboree 2005 Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon and Ala-Teen Convention in Olympia.

Prior to and after his retirement, he traveled to and vacationed in many foreign countries such as Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, France, Switzerland, England, Denmark and Russia, to name but a few.

Joe was a very good dancer and enjoyed dancing to a wide variety of music, attending many social organization dances in a number of cities in Montana, California, Minnesota and Washington. He enjoyed traveling with his wife and visiting with relatives along the way whenever possible. He also liked telling jokes, sharing his humor and stories through e-mail messages, listening to music, traveling to foreign places, reading, watching TV and working on the computer. He also enjoyed meeting and talking to everyone, and he truly loved to laugh. He always had a smile on his face.

He was very proud of the accomplishments of his children, as well as those of his nieces and nephews. He always stressed the importance of an education to everyone, encouraging people to be successful and to work hard, even in the face of obstacles, and to enjoy living - and laugh while journeying through life.

His family and friends will miss his quick wit, his generous and kind heart, the great smile that always transfigured his face and his good-hearted, infectious laugh. Joe loved his family and people. He was a good-natured man, and he taught his family that they could overcome adversity and obstacles to accomplish anything when they put their mind to it.

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