

Community Service

LeRoy Eagle Bear



Originally from Norris, South Dakota, LeRoy Eagle Bear settled in Sioux Falls, SD after graduating from the SD School for the Deaf (SDSD) in 1966. At the age of 11, he attended SDSD, and enjoyed participating in basketball, track, cross country, and other student activities.

After graduating from SDSD, he was employed by the same school as a boys' dorm supervisor for more than 15 years and was greatly loved by the students. As a dorm supervisor, he would encourage students to be active and get involved with sports and other school activities. Neatness and displaying good manners was always important

to LeRoy. At SDSD, LeRoy also was the coach of the youth boys basketball teams. He taught them the fundamentals of playing basketball and the importance of having a good and positive attitude of being an underdog.

LeRoy was an active member of the Sioux Falls Association of the Deaf (SFAD), the South Dakota Association of the Deaf (SDAD) and Deaf Seniors of South Dakota (DSSD). As a member of the SFAD basketball team, he received an All-Star Award by the Midwest Athletic Association for the Deaf (MAAD). He was the first native American to receive the award. He was also a MAAD Hall of Fame Inductee in 1976.

At one time LeRoy was employed by the John Morrell & Company (now known as Smithfield) for several years until he was hired by Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) to serve the Native American Community for ten years. During his



Coach EagleBear often shared his most fundamental part about being a winner.



LeRoy dribbled at his very final game at M.A.A.D in Denver after many years with S.F.A.D.

employment years at CSD LeRoy served as a board member of the nationwide Intertribal Deaf Council (IDC). Unfortunately it was not until 1995 when LeRoy was exposed to Native American culture and values. The rediscovery of his cultural traditions and his participation in cultural ceremonies made him ready and better prepared for his introduction to the IDC. In July 2005 he served as chairperson, coordinating the

IDC spiritual gathering at Camp Lakota. He became an Elder of the IDC. He was very humble, yet proud of this accomplishment. While working at CSD, LeRoy often went beyond the call of duty to assist people who needed transportation service.

LeRoy had his ups and downs in life. He struggled with alcoholism and became a proud sober for nearly 20 years before his death. During those 20 years he promoted sobriety to the deaf community by giving presentations to deaf students and adults. Additionally, he would volunteer and transport deaf individuals, on his own time, for many years, to Alcoholic Anonymous meetings on his own time and never charging them for gas, He provided peer support to deaf individuals with alcohol and drug addictions.

Throughout his life, as a student and later as an adult LeRoy looked at a person and saw them as a person - not rank, not class, not title. He was one to walk behind leaders in the community showing his support whenever he could. He understood very well that humility is absolutely necessary for learning and one does not need a college degree in order to serve others.



LeRoy and his wife, Eleanor enjoyed spending time together.