

Norman Anthony White Shirt
November 18, 1942 – October 5, 2024

Norman Anthony White Shirt, 81, of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, passed away peacefully Saturday, October 5, 2024, at Avera McKennan Hospital, with his loving nieces and nephews by his side. A gifted athlete and celebrated SDSD alumnus, Norman earned recognition at the state, national and international levels while remaining a generous, bighearted person to those who knew him.

Norman was born November 18, 1942, to Clarence WhiteShirt and Alfreida C. Eagledog. A Deaf Lakota man raised in Wagner, South Dakota, he entered the South Dakota School for the Deaf in 1949 and graduated in 1963.



At SDSD, Norman excelled in basketball, softball, cross-country, and track and field. His greatest achievements came in distance running, where his graceful stride, careful pacing and determination made him one of the school's most accomplished athletes.



Norman set a new record of 4:36.3 in the Class B region.

After placing 16th at the state cross-country meet in 1959 and second in 1960, Norman captured the individual state championship on October 11, 1961. His victory was especially remarkable because SDSD competed against much larger high schools before the state cross-country meet was divided into enrollment classifications.

In track, Norman drew national attention at the 1961 Corn Palace Relays in Mitchell, running a mile in 4:34.8 to break a Deaf American record that had stood since 1936. Later that season, he improved his time to 4:28.9, recognized at the time as the fastest mile by a Deaf runner in the United States. He also helped lead SDSD relay teams to victories.

His accomplishments earned him a place on the United States team at the 1961 International Games for the Deaf in Helsinki, Finland, now known as the Deaflympics. Although illness during training affected his preparation, Norman competed in the 1,500-meter race and finished eighth. The trip also gave him the opportunity to tour parts of Europe.



Norman's athletic legacy brought lasting recognition. He was inducted into the South Dakota Association of the Deaf Hall of Fame in 2000 and became a member of the inaugural class of the Deaf American Distance Running Hall of Fame in 2018.

After graduation, Norman made his home in Sioux Falls. He worked at the John Morrell meatpacking plant for 23 years before retiring. Beyond his athletic accomplishments, he was remembered for his generosity and the kindness he showed others.

His senior-year motto in the Pheasant yearbook reflected the determination that shaped his life: "If he is determined to do something, he can usually find a way to do it."

~ Continue to the next page ~



Survivors include his sisters, Jennifer (Chuck) Williams and Veronica (Louis) Brockman; his brothers, Charles WhiteShirt and Darrell (Carmen) WhiteShirt; his son, Nathan Herr; and his grandson, Jaxon. He also leaves his nieces and nephews, Clint Sandal, Sue Hicks, Todd Sandal, Shannon Loomis, Michael Holloway, Walter Holloway, Dina Whalen, Robert Carstens, Anthony Whiteshirt, Katrina WhiteShirt, Samantha WhiteShirt, Bill (Beth) Swaney, Pam Chinn and Krystal Chinn; and many great-nieces and great-nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his sister, Linda Picotte; his brother, Clarence WhiteShirt Jr.; and his niece, Gina Hill.

Graveside services were held October 11, 2024, at Cedar Presbyterian Cemetery in Swan Township, South Dakota, where he was laid to rest beside his grandmother, Hannah Mallory.

