

COMMUNITY NEWS

De La Torre and Gibson families Celebrate Sunrise Ceremony

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

Family members and friends gathered on the river's edge in lower Camp Verde on Saturday morning October 26, 2019 to shower blessings on Serenity Helena De La Torre for her one-day Na'ii'ees ceremony. Serenity is the daughter of the late Anthony Juan De La Torre and Lisa De La Torre of Tunlii.

This special Na'ii'ees was conducted by medicine man Terrill Hinton of Whiteriver, Arizona. Hinton is the grandson of the late Bert Hinton who grew up in Camp Verde long ago. The elder Hinton had conducted Serenity's maternal cousin Amy (Anderson) Martinez's Sunrise ceremony years before in Middle Verde.

This was a special version of the traditional four (4) day Sunrise ceremony condensed into a single morning. It was the songs, the drums and prayers with the cattail pollen, 'hah'in'din, which brought forth the special gifts of womanhood to young Serenity. With 16 songs to sing, Mr. Hinton along with his singers and some singers from the Camp Verde community conducted this ceremony in a respectful and holy manner.

Serenity's maternal grandmother was the late Amy (Gibson) Mendoza of Clarkdale

who lived to be 93 years and was a traditional Apache who knew the language, the prayers and all the stories of the Apache people. This occasion brought forth many of those memories of Serenity's grandmother. Clancy Gibson, great uncle to Serenity of Globe, Arizona, was the morning speaker on behalf of the family as he spoke about the significance of the ceremony and how the community needs to honor the traditions and respect the customs.

Courtney (Jenkins) Huskey (an enrolled member of Yavapai-Apache Nation) along with her husband, Jeremy, co-sponsors of the Sunrise dance. Courtney is the daughter of Carol Williams, Niece to Debra Telese, Danny Jenkins and Wendy Wiki all of Camp Verde. Jeremy is from a prominent family from a small hamlet north of Winslow in Tolani Lake on the Navajo Reservation.

Courtney was guided by the medicine man as she performed the rituals of dressing and massaging Serenity while community members stood nearby to witness. And through the ancient songs of the medicine people, and special prayers, Serenity was brought into a new world of womanhood. The ceremony included the same traditions such as the fruit line, basket pour and the running



Prayers to the Creator as Serenity kneels for blessing

YAN News photographs

in the four directions. Following the ceremony the family served traditional foods for lunch which were enjoyed by the both sides.

The Na'ii'ees is considered one of the last sacred ceremonies of the Apache people and the Yavapai-Apache, families continue to honor these traditions by participating and conducting the Na'ii'ees ceremony for their daughters who wish to have this ceremony done for them.

Matilda (Fields) and Edward Cassadore's daughter, Miah of Tunlii community, stood next to Serenity as her part-

ner and danced with Serenity to show her the path and conduct of the dance as Miah had already been blessed with her ceremony this past year. This is Miah's final dance as a partner.

Barbara McCabe from the Nation's Apache culture department and her husband, Henry, assisted with the Na'ii'ees. Mr. McCabe brought the cane into the ceremony based on tradition. Mrs. McCabe said that her husband use to sing with the elder Bert Hinton performing the Na'ii'ees ceremony throughout Apache country.

Many people came from far away to witness this event. Serenity's paternal grandfather David De La Torre spoke eloquently of the family and how David felt honored as a grandfather to be with his granddaugh-

ter Serenity during this time. David's late son, Anthony De La Torre is father to Serenity who passed away some years ago. Anthony was employed at Cliff Castle Casino in the Marketing department.

David's wife is Diana (Mendez) De La Torre; whose parents were the late Juan and Harriett (Hood) Mendez. Harriett Mendez was Vice Chairwoman of the Yavapai-Apache Nation. Paternal aunts Annette Mendez of Clarkdale, Kathy Mendez of Albuquerque and uncle Kevin Mendez of Tunlii were also in attendance for the ceremony along with extended Hood family from the Yavapai-Apache Nation.

"This means so much to me—for her to be stepping into womanhood. Serenity said 'I don't even know how

to act like a grown-up.' I told her 'Don't worry, you're still a kid--just have some fun' ", said David.

Maternal aunt Judy (Mendoza) and Robert Anderson and daughter Amy Martinez's family traveled from Las Vegas to be with the De La Torre and Gibson family during the ceremony.

"The family would like to express their gratitude to the Yavapai-Apache Nation, the Apache and Yavapai Culture departments, Fleet department, friends and family for their thoughts, prayers and assistance during this ceremony," said Lisa De La Torre, mother to Serenity.



Serenity is joined by her Godparents Courtney Jenkins Huskey (r) and her husband Jeremy with Mlcah Casadore (L) providing assistance to Serenity.



DJ Jenkins cigarette man leads the co-sponsor family to greet the sponsor's family.

Douglas Hill, Nation's new finance director

BY DON DECKER,
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After the departure of Nadie Beauty who transferred to the Housing Program as the new housing director, Mr. Hill came on board as the new finance director.

Mr. Hill brings with him an extensive background in financial management. He received a Bachelors in Accounting from the University of Arizona. In his formative educational endeavors, he attended the Marana School district north of Tucson where he graduated from high school.



Douglas Hill

With the prestigious qualifications as a CPA for the past 25 years,

Mr. Hill has been employed with various city entities in Arizona.

This includes the Maricopa County Treasurer's office, the government of Payson, Controller for the Maricopa County Attorney's office, Santa Cruz County as finance person and at the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in Scottsdale.

Mr. Hill's family includes 5 grown children with two females who has brought the family 3

grandkids. When Mr. Hill isn't working on the finances of the Nation, he enjoys sports, basketball and football. Basketball and tennis activities were his forte in high school he says.

"I can still play tennis a bit. I enjoy most sports and like to hike, camping and fishing," he adds.

Mr. Hill has one of the most interesting life experiences living in Venezuela from 1983-1984. He served on an 18 month mission for the Church of the Latter Day Saints. After a 2-month crash course in Spanish, Mr. Hill and a fellow mission-

ary moved to Venezuela to share their beliefs. Venezuela is situated on the northern coast of South America close to Panama City. To the west is the country of Columbia. Caracas the capital of Venezuela, is the largest city.

Mr. Hill lived in the cities of Merida and Barquisimeto in the western part of the country near the country of Columbia where he and his companion spent 16 months going door-to-door spreading the news of the church.

"It was an interesting culture. That was back when the country had a lot of money and they

were doing well. Since then, the country has had a lot of turmoil and issues," says Mr. Hill about his experiences in Venezuela.

"It was great getting to know the people- so many good people and to know the culture... to learn Spanish and to see the world a little bit", says Mr. Hill.

The sharing of the gospel was not in vain according to Mr. Hill as his mission received 15 new converts.

"I met some really good people down there. Some positive change in their lives and that's always a good thing," adds Mr. Hill.