

Kickapoo Reservation, KS



John Ferris "Noshniish" Thomas Sr., 82 of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, passed away peacefully at the Veterans Affairs hospital in Topeka, Kansas on Monday, May 9th, 2022.

He was born on the Kickapoo reservation, near Horton, Kansas, in the month of July 1939. He graduated from Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas in 1958 where he ran track for Haskell and won the Emporia state running championship. He was a Vietnam War Veteran who served his country in the United States Navy aboard the USS Ernest G. Small from 1959 to 1963. He retired from Boeing/McDonnell-Douglas as an aircraft mechanic and served on the Kickapoo Tribal Council for 20 plus years.

John enjoyed traveling with his wife across the country and meeting new friends along the way. He was well known throughout Indian Country through his work and travels as a Tribal leader. John was known for his generosity and quick wit. John was an accomplished bowler and loved spending time fishing, gardening, gathering traditional foods, cooking, lighting fireworks, and driving the backroads on his side-by-side with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He also enjoyed a good slice of gooseberry pie.

John is preceded in death by his parents, Hollis Thomas and Minnie Soldier; sister, Ramona Cadue; brothers, Edwin "Koke" Thomas, Theodore "Nacko" Thomas, Jim Keo, Orville Thomas; and his son John "Whopshan" Thomas, Jr.

John is survived by his loving wife and companion of more than 38 years, Ruth Thomas, and by his three sons and five daughters: Kelley ManyLightnings, Christina Jim, Jason (Tisha) Thomas, Lorinda Thomas, Michelle Thomas, Jeffrey Thomas, Jonathan Thomas, and Johanna (Jason Whitewater) Thomas.

He is also survived by his sister Lythia Shopteese and brother William "Augie" Thomas; 31 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren; and many loving nephews and nieces. John was the best Misho to ever live. He will be missed by his loved ones and all who had the pleasure of calling him friend.

Services will be at sundown on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at the Kickapoo Community Building. Burial with military graveside rites will be at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday at the Kennekuk Cemetery on the Kickapoo Reservation. A special message may be sent to the family at www.dishon-maple-chaney.com