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03/16/2013 - Thomas Andrew Gray

A Mass will be conducted for Thomas Andrew Gray, age 62, of Hot Springs, SD Saturday, March 16, 2013 at 11:00 AM in Carmel, Indiana at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.

A memorial has been established for the SuAnne Big Crow Boys & Girls Club, PO Box 5079, Pine Ridge, SD 57770.

A memorial service will be Thursday, May 4, 2013 at 2:00 PM at the Mueller Center 801 S. 6th Street, Hot Springs, SD 57747.

Thomas Andrew Gray died February 20, 2013, at the Indiana University Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana. Proud of his heritage and his family, he was the youngest child of Raymond and Ada (McKean) Gray and was born on December 15, 1950 in Gordon, Nebraska.

Mr. Gray was quite the story teller and enjoyed reminiscing about his history, his times with his family, friends and neighbors, cabin stories from his youthful trips to Canada and all the wonderful adventures he had experienced in his travels to Europe and India. Tom enlisted in the Air Force in 1969. He was stationed at the Alconbury Royal Air Force Station located in Cambridgeshire, England where he quickly rose in the ranks to become a Staff Sergeant.

Tom's passion for children was shown by his many contributions throughout the country as a teaching instructor for secondary and adult education in language arts and technology. His greatest accomplishments were noticed in South Dakota and California. His primary interest was working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs School Districts.

He taught grades 9-12 at Pine Ridge High School in SD where he developed a language arts program introducing computers in an across-the-curriculum writing project. He authored the publication, "Artists, Authors and Scientists" and helped Pine Ridge High School students create a documentary which still continues today - featuring their stories, "Sparkling Science". He became the recipient of Apple Computer Education Grants Award in both 1990 and 1992 and is featured in the Apple Computer, Inc.'s Publication, "Computers in the Classroom". He was also honored by receiving the Christa McAuliffe Fellowship Award Winner in 1988.

He won several grants and was recognized for winning the US Department of Education Consortium Challenge Grant in Technology for Bureau of Indian Affairs School in 1995.

Tom taught at the Lincoln Magnet HS in San Jose, CA in 1996 as the Computer Science Department Head and was selected to teach at one of San Francisco's first charter schools, Leadership Charter High School in San Francisco, CA in 1998. There he taught his students using progressive teaching methods and standards.

Tom was coordinator for the workshop for Bureau of Indian Affairs Teachers: On Line for Learning. Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence, KS (1995) and traveled to 22 Bureau and tribally operated schools. He conducted initial and follow-up visits, installed technology and conducted in-service with administrators, teachers and students. He worked with instructors integrating the curriculum through Whole Language – technology as a tool. He coordinated this program in the following schools; Loneman School Corporation, Lower Brule Day School, Nenahnezad Boarding School, Oneida Nation Elementary and High Schools, Pierre Indian Learning Center, Salt River Day School, San Juan Day School, and Takini School, Toadlene Boarding School (1995).

Tom participated in the IISME Summer Teaching Fellowship in 1998 where he worked with Sun Microsystems Inc.'s Foundation Team, researching innovative teaching practices and methodologies that Sun could utilize in their business practices. He visited classrooms located across Silicon Valley and attended workshops at Lawrence Livermore Labs. Through the program he teamed with other Bay Area Teachers from Netscape, NASA, Cisco, and Adobe to report on projects for IISME faculty.

Tom was a member of the Four State Steering Committee for Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico Rural Systemic Initiative (UCAN-RSI) - 1995-2000 and winner of the US Department of Education, Secretary's Exemplary Program Award – 2000.

Tom loved his family and friends and was extremely proud of his children Jeremy and Lindsey and all their accomplishments. Tom is survived by his loving wife Diana Gray of Hot Springs, SD; his children, Jeremy (April) Gray of Prescott, Arizona and Lindsey Gray of Salt Lake City, Utah; his sister Marsha Miller of Hot Springs, South Dakota; his brother, Jim McKean of Hot Springs, SD and four grandchildren (Lauren, Zoe, Emma and Lucy). He also had a special fondness for his extended family members who constantly supported him and his two puppies Jackie and Charley who provided him with hours of entertainment each day.

Tom was stricken with Primary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis in 2007. His health steadily declined as he continued to smile, laugh and live with dignity.

Flanner and Buchanan Funeral Center of Carmel, Indiana is in charge of arrangements.