

St. Anthony Zuni Indian Mission

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From the desk of Rev. Dale Jamison

August 22, 1994

Dear Jimmy,

This is our first week of school, and unfortunately it started on a sad note. Coach James Elliott, who had been a fixture here at the school for 15 years, passed on to the next world. May his soul rest in peace.

Originally from Denver, Jim loved the Zuni people so much that he requested to be buried right here in Zuni. His Last Will & Testament reads:

"My personal choice of a burial spot would be on the school grounds near the cross-shaped flower bed, or anywhere on the Zuni Reservation.

I do not want a coffin or headstone, but a simple Indian burial - just wrapped in a blanket. The Good Lord knows where to find me on the last day.

Also, any money that would be spent for a coffin or headstone would be better spent on educational needs for the children and St. Anthony School."

He was buried just as he had requested on July 30th in front of a large crowd of students, former students, parents, and tribal leaders. It was a powerfully moving experience.



Coach Elliott with the boys' basketball team!

Normally, a non-Indian would not be allowed to be buried on Indian Reservation ground.

To show just how endearing he was to all the Zunis who loved him, the Tribal Council made a very special exception and Mr. Elliott was laid in a simple Indian blanket in the community cemetery.

Any tribute that I could give on behalf of Jim Elliott would fall far short of the reality. His life was a total sacrifice of love to the children.

He was always there for them, and he gave everything he had to them. His family was the children at St. Anthony's and their families.

Jim completed a full career in the air wing division of the U.S. Navy. After he retired, he came to us in 1979.

He was our basketball coach, our cross country coach, our physical education teacher, and our computer teacher. The philosophy that Jim imparted to the children was for them to be the very best possible. Give your all every time you attempt something. Live life to the fullest. He lived this way himself, and he was successful in spreading his message to others.

And so it is right and fitting that I should run the Duke City Marathon in memory of Jim Elliott. He was a strong advocate of athletics and physical fitness. He would always encourage me when he could see I was tired of training.

Most importantly, I am running the Marathon on September 11th for everything Jim Elliott dedicated his life to. His life was a monument to hard work, perseverance, and love of others. This run is a kind of prayer. It is a prayer in memory of Jim Elliott. It is a prayer of petition that we be able to continue our mission at the school. It is a prayer of hope for the future of all of the children in Zuni.

Let's make this the very best Marathon Campaign ever! Let us do it for the children. Let us do it for Jim -- but more importantly, let us do it for all he lived for -- so his vital work can continue. Please fill out the enclosed pledge card today. Be as generous as possible.

James Elliott was undoubtedly one of the finest human beings I have ever met. A Jim Elliott does not come along very often. We here at St. Anthony's are blessed to have known him. God bless you, Jim. We are going to miss you. But we know you are with God.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dale

Rev. Dale Jamison
Mission Director

P.S. Please help me to help the children in loving memory of Coach Elliott. School has started, and I have many bills to pay. I am running this Marathon to help eradicate the ignorance and poverty that Jim gave his whole life to eliminate. Let it not be in vain. I will be praying for Jim and your intentions every step of the 26 miles.



We're going to miss you Coach!