

FERRELL SECAKUKU
NOVEMBER 13, 1937 – JULY 25, 2007

IN JULY 2007, FERRELL SECAKUKU, PASSED AWAY AT THE AGE OF 69. FERRELL WAS A REMARKABLE MAN. HE WAS A FATHER, GRANDFATHER, HUSBAND, PARTNER, FARMER, RANCHER, A LEADER IN BOTH THE SPIRITUAL AND THE POLITICAL REALMS, BUSINESSMAN, COMPOSER AND SINGER OF TRADITIONAL AND CHILDREN'S SONGS, TEACHER, ARTIST, LONG DISTANCE RUNNER, ANTHROPOLOGIST, AND HOPI AMBASSADOR TO THE WORLD. FOR THE MANY WHO KNEW HIM, HE WAS AMONG THE WISEST, HUMBLEST, AND HARDEST WORKING PEOPLE WE HAVE EVER KNOWN. HE WAS A TRUE HOPI.

AT THE AGE OF 69, FERRELL EARNED A MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN ANTHROPOLOGY AT NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY. HE KNEW THAT, WITH THE PASSING OF HIS GENERATION, MORE AND MORE OF HOPI KNOWLEDGE AND TRADITION WOULD BE LOST. IT WAS HIS GOAL TO BRIDGE THIS RICH ORAL TRADITION OF ANCIENT LEGENDS, CHILDREN'S TALES, AND CLAN HISTORIES WITH MODERN ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH, AFFIRMING AND STRENGTHENING BOTH APPROACHES. HE KNEW THE PRACTICALITY AND THE INTEGRITY OF HOPI CULTURE AND WANTED TO PASS



Ferrell Secakuku and friends at springs below Supawlavivi Village (Ferrell in front). Photograph by Natasa Garic.

ITS LESSONS TO HOPI YOUTH AND THE LARGER WORLD. TO THE END, HE FOLLOWED THE LESSON OF THE CORNFIELDS GLANCING BACK PERIODICALLY IN THE CORN ROW, IN ORDER TO CONTINUE LIFE AHEAD ON A STRAIGHT AND PURPOSEFUL PATH.

DURING THE LAST MONTHS OF HIS LIFE, FERRELL SECAKUKU COMPOSED SEVEN SONGS FOR THE HOPI PEOPLE. THE SONGS ARE ABOUT PLANTS AND DRAW FROM HIS WORK TO REVIVE PEACH ORCHARDS AND HATIKO (BEAN) FIELDS ON THE LAND BELOW SUPAWLAVI VILLAGE. THROUGH THESE SONGS, FERRELL WISHED TO SEND A MESSAGE TO HOPI CHILDREN—LIVE A GOOD HOPI LIFE, LEARN THE HOPI LANGUAGE, BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE. SONGS ARE A SUBTLE WAY TO SHARE A MESSAGE, NOT JUST FOR THE CHILDREN, BUT FOR ALL OF US. IN THIS WAY, FERRELL SHARED HIS KNOWLEDGE AND PASSION AS A SKILLED COMPOSER AND TEACHER.

FERRELL DEDICATED HIS LAST YEARS OF LIFE TO PRESERVING THE HOPI LANGUAGE BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THAT HOPI LIFE IS UNDERSTOOD ONLY THROUGH THE LANGUAGE. THE CD *Living Through Hopi Songs* IS ONE OF FERRELL'S FINAL WORKS, THE THIRD CD OF SONGS THAT HE COMPOSED AND PRODUCED THROUGH HIS NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION MESA MEDIA.