



Lillis L. "Manshadow" Waylett

1937-2020

By [Messenger Staff](#) | Published on May 27, 2020

Decatur – Lillis L. "Manshadow" Waylett, 82, of Decatur, went to be with his Lord Sunday, May 24, 2020, in Bridgeport.

Funeral service is 10:30 a.m. Thursday, May 28, at Hawkins Funeral Home in Decatur with burial in Oaklawn Cemetery. Gerre Joiner will officiate.

Family will receive friends 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at the funeral home.

Pallbearers include Tyler Waylett, Justin Waylett, Austin Waylett, Chance Overton, Brad Hardt and Dr. Charles Kelley Tibbels.

Honorary Pallbearers are Bob Johnson and Frank Meador.

Lillis L. Manshadow Waylett was born Nov. 16, 1937, in St. Ignatius, Mont., to Joe and Frances Waylett. Manshadow graduated Missoula County High School, class of 1955 and earned a two-year college certificate at University of Maryland, awarded November 1960 at Camp Knox, South Korea. Manshadow, a proud Salish tribal member in Montana, was a veteran of nine years, U.S. Army Field Artillery Fire Direction.

Manshadow retired from IBM Corporation in 1988 and from CEO of S&K Electronics in 1993. In his careers, he traveled to 49 of the 50 states (Alabama the exception)

and 14 foreign countries. During this time, he achieved recognition as the organizer and executive director of the Helena Indian Alliance, Montana's first urban Indian, self-help organization. By vote of the membership, he was permanently awarded the "chief" bonnet of eagle feathers as their leader. In his move to Phoenix, he kept up active Indian involvement, briefly joining the Phoenix Indian Center, an active group involved with erecting an Indian medical clinic in South Phoenix. Although his participation there was limited to the little clinic he helped get running, it is now a fully operational, five-story hospital.

In recognition of his community involvement, IBM granted him an 18-month paid leave of absence to return to his reservation to work on economic assistance for his fellow tribal members, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana (CSKT). While there, he was able to introduce and have enacted the first and only commercial code for any Indian tribe, (Ordinance 54-A). This enabled any tribal member to organize and charter a corporation within the tribe, rather than with the state outside its boundaries. When the ordinance received a passing vote of the council, Manshadow immediately filed a charter for Mountain Chief Corporation which was the first Indian Commercial corporation ever registered.

While there, his achievements also included arranging free formal training for tribal members in merchandising, hotel/motel management and acquisition, and training on modern machines and devices. He is listed as the original holder of the U.S. tariff for interstate shipment of teepee poles. Before leaving to rejoin IBM, he was brought into the planning of another major tribal development put together by council members Joe McDonald and Bearhead Swaney, a tribal community college. With these two good friends, he took the time to evaluate, prepare and organize the many forms and materials to apply for the federal assistance to create a new Indian College. As council members, Joe and Bearhead were not allowed to sign or endorse any such application for federal monies. Waylett became the "official" signer for the proposed institution as the "college president." When his leave was due to end, Waylett appointed Joe McDonald president of the college where he later retired as the head of the highest-ranked Indian College in America. Manshadow also authored several different writings and played a part in a documentary film during his retirement. These included: "The Book of Waylett", a family history album; "Conversation With American Indians", for IBM Social Research; "I Have A Feeling For This Place", an IBM Documentary film on reservation social leave of absence; "Shadows Talk," a non-fiction ancestor story; "The Justice Brigade", a fiction mystery about modern-day Montana vigilantes. After retirement from IBM, he returned to involvement with his Native tribe of the Salish Indian people. He was an initial member of the CSKT Veteran's Warrior Society, the official tribe honor guard, and was awarded the tribe's warrior Pendleton Veteran's blanket. Manshadow was invited to the Board of Directors recognition of an Indian leader's feather "bonnet." In this capacity, he worked closely with NASA Director, Daniel Golden, to have his company certified as the first and only Indian vendor to NASA. At a gathering of more than 2,000 NASA employees and officials at the Houston Center, he was invited to give a benediction in Salish language and traditional attire for the commencement of their 1993 budget, which he did with great pride.

Waylett spent 16 years as a guest of the Adams' annual family medicine lodge, and at midnight in the 1993 lodge, was proclaimed by medicine men Louis Adams and Joe Pablo to all living people and those Beyond, the Salish name, "Manshadow." It is the name to which he thereafter identified.

After marrying Leisa, Manshadow moved to make residence in Decatur where he was welcomed by her loving family and the wonderful citizens of Wise County. In the early work of the Wise County Veterans Group he was life Member No. 12 and took up active roles in their civic work which included the creation of the Veterans Memorial Park in Decatur, the naming of the Samuel Sampler Readiness Center in Decatur, and the creation of the Veteran's Museum in Bridgeport.

Manshadow was preceded in death by both of his parents; a daughter, Wendy Waylett; and son Mitchell Waylett.

Manshadow is survived by his wife, Leisa in Decatur; two sisters; a daughter-in-law, Joy; and granddaughters Annie and Chrissie, all of Missoula, Mont.; son Tyler and wife, Missy; grandsons Justin and Austin and his wife, Lindsey; and granddaughter Rhys of Fort Worth; stepson Chance Overton; stepdaughter Kara Hardt and husband, Brad, and their two daughters, Lyla and Josie, all of Decatur.