



## Obituary

**Born:** Tuesday, August 10, 1943

**Died:** Monday, April 8, 2019

James Virgil Wells, Blackfeet Enrolled Member, beloved father, grandfather, great grandfather, brother, uncle, cousin and friend to many, left this world on April 8, 2019, at Spokane, Washington. His parents were Rose Yellow Owl Wells and David Wells, Sr. of Browning, MT.

Wake Services: Glacier Homes Community Center,  
Browning, Montana

Viewing: April 13, Saturday - 1:00

Rosary: April 14, Sunday – 7:00 pm. Officiating: Reverend  
Father Kohler

Funeral Mass: April 15, Monday- Little Flower Catholic  
Parish, Browning, with Burial to follow at the Wells Family  
Cemetery, Old Agency, south of Browning on Highway 89.  
Foster Funeral Home of St. Ignatius is handling funeral  
arrangements.

Military Rites to take place.

## Service Summary

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### Visitation

1:00 PM to 11:30 PM, Sat Apr 13,  
2019

### Old Eagle Shields

By Government Square  
Browning, Montana

### Mass of Christian Burial

2:00 PM Mon Apr 15, 2019

Location: - *Not available* -

James Virgil was born on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation on July 10, 1943 into a Blackfoot speaking household. He spent his early years at Black Tail, the then family ranch and was raised in Martin City for 14 years, where the family made their home until 1963.

He would come to attend boarding schools for nine (9) years collectively at the former Ursuline Convent of St. Ignatius, Cut Bank Boarding School on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, and at Flandreau Indian Vocational High School, Flandreau, South Dakota, where he would graduate in 1963. Virgil loved high school and was member of the Flandreau Acapella Indian Choir that traveled extensively throughout the Dakotas and Minnesota. Additionally, his early years of high school consisted of 3 years Public school at Columbia Falls and at Browning High School before attending Flandreau.

Virgil would come to help his parents on the newly located family ranch at Old Agency before moving to Baldwin Park California, where he would work as laborer in the middle 1960's before joining the US Army, with two-year duty station at Mainz, Germany. Upon discharge, he would return home to Browning, accepting employment with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, again assisting his parents in ranching. Virgil would subsequently enroll in Federal Relocation Program for machinist schooling in the the Bay area, where he would enter marriage with Bonnie Champine. They would make their home in Spokane, and later divorce. He would continue to live in Spokane the remainder of his life.

Virgil would attend local community college at Spokane and

subsequently work for Kaiser Aluminum and at the Airway Heights Indian casino for several years until ill health forced his full retirement. He was very active at the Indian Center, having taught many youth new to the area to drum and sing traditional Blackfoot songs; he was a lifelong Elvis fan, his collections include: old cars, photographs and old reels of traditional Indian singing from various tribes throughout the US and Canada, family photographs that he duplicated for his parents, as with Indian books and artworks, sculpture, attending pow-wows and singing, frequenting pawn shops, in addition to compiling lineage research, and playing casino machines.

Virgil was a hard worker, a good provider. He worked most of his life, often sharing with his children insofar as purchasing a 2nd home nearby. And he was very likable and accepting of others, loved a good joke, loved to laugh. He welcomed visitors to his home in Spokane, loved being with relatives, children, grandchildren, immediate and extended family and with those who shared same interests. Virgil also loved telling stories, swapping artworks and traveling when possible. We shall miss him, his goodness, his loving spirit...

Survivors include children, Eleanor Rose Wells of Browning, Robert Wells of Spokane (Misty), grandchildren, Alicia (Gerald), Chamisa, Camillo, LaMonte, and 5 great grandchildren, Amari, Dakota, Cody, Austin, and Winter Rose. sisters, Geraldine Gordon and Wilma North Peigan of East Glacier Park, Linda Bull Calf of Browning, brothers, Clarence Tommy Wells and Terry Rose of Browning.

Loved ones who precede Virgil are parents, Rose Yellow Owl Wells and David Wells, Sr., and brother, John "Buster" Yellow Kidney, sisters, Violet Delphine (Tiny) Wells, Doris Wells, Dorothy Wells Dragonfly, Vivian Wells, and David Wells, Jr., paternal grandparents: Philip "Au-bu-ya" (Little Calf) Wells and Jenny (Eagle Child) Gambler Wells, maternal grandparents, Aloysius "Louis" Yellow Owl and Margaret Spotted Bear Yellow Owl.