

The Pueblo Chieftain

NEWS

Pueblo says goodbye to John Beno

Gayle Perez

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A true friend of Pueblo was bid a final farewell on Saturday.

Hundreds of people from all walks of life crowded into the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart to say goodbye to their favorite priest, politician, sports fan and friend at the funeral Mass for the Rev. John R. Beno.

Beno, who turned 69 on Nov. 13, died Tuesday at his home in Pueblo. He is survived by a brother, George S. (Elizabeth) Beno Jr. and a sister, Ann (Richard) Skrei and their families.

A Catholic priest in the Pueblo Diocese and former state senator, Beno was remembered Saturday for his strong wit and humor, his sometimes abrasive personality, his dedication and passion and general love for life.

The Rev. Marvin Kapushion, who delivered the eulogy, talked of the many decisions the giant of a man with a golden heart had made during his lifetime.

"John was a man of decision," Kapushion said.

\ "Early on he made a decision of faith. He demonstrated the faith and the impact that the word of God had on him.\ "

After he was ordained a priest in 1959, Kapushion said, Beno made the decision to serve in Pueblo, where he became a friend to many.

Later on, Kapushion noted that Beno made the decision to enter politics and eventually serve the people of Pueblo and Colorado in the state Senate.

As a two-term senator and member of the powerful Joint Budget Committee, Beno was faced with many decisions that impacted the community and the state.

Eventually, Beno would be faced with a major decision of whether to leave politics or leave the priesthood when a new canon law was established that prohibited priests from serving in political office.

Beno chose the priesthood and in doing so vowed to continue to serve the people of Pueblo.

\ "John had a real sense of humor and he had a real sense of reaching out to others,\ " Kapushion said. \ "He always reached out to those less fortunate.\ "

Kapushion said Beno was a strong advocate of education and would do what he could to make sure students received an education.

\ "John was a very giving person and we will never know how much he gave to students to continue their education,\ " he said.

Beno retired as vicar of finance for the diocese in 1994 because of health concerns, but that didn't stop him from keeping involved in the church and the community.

He continued to be an avid supporter of Pueblo high schools and University of Southern Colorado athletic teams, attending games as often as he could.

"John continued on in life and he continued making decisions always knowing that with the faith he had, he was never alone," said Kapushion.

Judging from the coaches and athletes, parishioners and priests, peace officers and politicians, Catholics and non-Catholics, businessmen and babies, teachers, lawyers and friends who attended his funeral, Beno truly was never alone.