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## For Immediate Release

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### **WILLIAM R. RHODES, FORMER GOVERNOR OF THE GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY, PASSES AWAY THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2017**

Today Gila River Indian Community Governor Stephen Roe Lewis announced the passing of former Governor, William R. Rhodes. "It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of one of the leaders and elders of our Community," stated Governor Lewis. "On behalf of our tribal government, and our Community members, I extend our deepest condolences to the Rhodes family, and we extend our sincerest thoughts and prayers. As we reflect on the life of Governor Rhodes we are grateful for his service, commitment and devotion to the Community."

William R. Rhodes served the Gila River Indian Community for over 30 years, serving at various times in all three branches of the tribal government. He served as Chief Judge of the Gila River Indian Community Court for 15 years during the 1970's and '80's. During that formative period for tribal courts he worked with such organizations as the National Indian Court Judges Association to provide leadership to his own tribal community and to other tribal communities seeking to develop their own tribal courts. Thereafter, he was elected Lt. Governor, and then was elected as Council representative from District Four, where he served three terms. He returned to the Court when he was again elected as Chief Judge of the Gila River Indian Community Court. During Chief Judge Rhodes' most recent tenure, the Gila River Indian Community Court modernized its facility and procedures to reflect the changing times and increasing case-load, and also increased the number of elected judges to deal with the increasing number of court cases. In 2003, he was elected as Governor of the Gila River Indian Community. He was re-elected to a second term as Governor, where he served until his retirement. Following his retirement from public office, he continued to remain active in family, church and community activities.

Details about funeral services will be provided by the family.

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*Gila River Indian Community located on 372,000 acres in south-central Arizona and home to the indigenous O'odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) people. The Tribe is comprised of seven districts, the administrative offices and departments are located in Sacaton, and serve the people throughout these seven community districts. 100% of its profits from gaming and 17 other Enterprises are utilized by the community providing services and opportunities to achieve the highest quality of life.*