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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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<http://www.amadorbooks.com/books/unbrokenspirit.htm>

**Amador Publishers bids farewell to Hashke' Yitaaswod
[He ran amongst the warriors], a.k.a. Gilbert John, 1957 - 2022**

Gilbert John, author of *Unbroken Spirit: my life before and after quadriplegia*, has died at the age of 65. He had lived with quadriplegia since sustaining a spinal cord injury at the age of 17. Prior to that, Gilbert excelled as an athlete, artist, and manager of the family silversmithing business. In the years since, Gilbert continued to prove himself as a leader, learner, and creative artist.

Born into the Navajo Nation in Four Corners, NM, Gilbert was raised on the land and received his early education in the now-notorious Indian Boarding Schools. His accident plunged him into the world of Western medicine and rehabilitation, while his physical impairment created a rift with traditional Navajo culture, in which displaying and speaking about illness and disability were taboo. With the encouragement of doctors and staff at Carrie Tingley Children's Hospital (now UNM Carrie Tingley Hospital) Gilbert completed his high school diploma and went on to earn his bachelor's degree (University of New Mexico, 1988).

Gilbert's accomplishments in a pre-ADA world, before the widespread use of computers, cannot be overstated. He attended college, traveled, and lived independently. He remained a trusted and valued advisor to his family and friends, who provided most of his care. When he returned to the rugged Navajo reservation and met even greater challenges, he became an advocate for people with disabilities on and off tribal lands. He served on the Navajo Nation Advisory Council on Disability (2003-2005); the Governor's Commission on Disability (2004-2010); and the Statewide Independent Living Council for Northwest NM (2006-2012).

The idea of writing a book had been on Gilbert's mind long before it was suggested by a friend, who gave him a cassette tape recorder to use for dictation. After several years and many difficulties, Gilbert's autobiography was published (Acacia, 2010). Equipped with assistive technology, Gilbert continued to write. After the first edition of *Unbroken Spirit* went out of print, Gilbert provided his early files and some new writings to Amador Publishers. From these a Prologue and Postscript were added and original chapters expanded to make the Second Edition.

In his Prologue, Gilbert writes of his dreams of escape, how his dream self would hop on his motorcycle and "...just go riding down the path of the neon moonlight, as far as he possibly could go, and leave everything and everyone behind him." But Hashke Yitaaswod stayed to fulfill his purpose before taking that path. These things kept him going: Devotion to family; reverence for his Creator; delight in nature; curiosity about the world; an unwavering belief that medical science would someday restore his mobility. And meanwhile, he had work to do, and he did it.

"It is my understanding that a mind is the only element needed to do almost anything."

—Gilbert John, from *Unbroken Spirit*

