

WOMEN OF WINSLOW



Elsa Neva Setima Lomawaima Adams

(born 1927, died 1993)

Elsa Adams was an early Hopi graduate of Northern Arizona University and passed on her love of learning in tribal schools for three decades.

Elsa Neva Setima was born April 15, 1927, in Winslow to a prominent Hopi family from the village of Sipaulovi, Second Mesa. Her father, Ben Setima, was an Indian art dealer from Oraibi, Arizona.

Elsa graduated from Winslow High School in 1946. She loved music, dance, and poetry, and her extracurricular activities included band and glee club. She also participated in Hopi Social Dances and other activities at the Santa Fe Railway's Laguna Colony Round House in Winslow.

Elsa received a Bachelor's Degree of Science in Education from the Arizona State College at Flagstaff (now Northern Arizona University) in 1959, and earned graduate credits there as well.

Elsa became an elementary school teacher for the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Office of Indian Education. She taught at tribal schools all over northern Arizona and New Mexico for thirty years, including Toreva and Moencopi schools on the Hopi Reservation and Kayenta, Dilkon, and Fort Wingate schools on the Navajo Reservation. Elsa's teaching career began well after the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 introduced the teaching of Indian culture in BIA schools, so her curricula was rich with Native history and arts.

Elsa was married twice and had a child from each marriage. Her oldest, Hartman Lomawaima, was the first Native American to be named Director of the University of Arizona's Arizona State Museum in Tucson since its founding in 1893. Sadly, Hartman passed away in 2008. Her younger daughter, Peggy Adams, is a domestic engineer and Hopi Native Liaison for the City of Winslow.

Elsa spent her retirement years enjoying her friends at the Winslow Senior Center. She died on September 27, 2003, at age 76 and was buried at Desert View Cemetery in Winslow.



Upper Left: Elsa in traditional dress for a Hopi Social Dance

Left: Elsa (bottom row, third from right) in the WHS Class of 1946

Bottom Left: Elsa with her fifth-grade students at Fort Wingate

Right: Elsa with her son, Hartman Lomawaima

