



Carrier Sekani Tribal Council

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Carrier Sekani Tribal Council Mourns the Loss of Esteemed Dakelh Leader Justa Monk of Tl'azt'en Nation

Dakelh Territory, Prince George: The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council is mourning the loss of one of its most influential and respected leaders, Justa Monk of Tl'azt'en Nation. He served as Tribal Chief of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council from 1981-1983 and again from 1990-1994. His lengthy career as an elected politician ended last summer when he resigned as the Chief of Tl'azt'en Nation.

As a child Justa lived and worked on the land of his ancestors with his family and Clan where he learned the Dakelh language and culture. However, as with most Indigenous children, he eventually was forced into the Residential School system. After spending a number of years learning and working in the Lejac School, life became increasingly intolerable and dangerous and he fled with his brother. The trauma of his experiences in the school overcame Justa and he struggled for years with his personal demons.

Justa found his way back from a life of alcohol, violence and pain, and with the help and encouragement of his Elders he transformed his grief and loss into a passion to fight for social and cultural change and he went on to enter into a political career. As the founding Chief of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Justa helped to build a powerful political institution which brought together many Dakelh/Sekani Nations and voices all working together toward common goals.

As a leader, Justa Monk was outspoken and forceful in his manner toward his fellow Chiefs and the people who worked for and with him. He was passionate about changing the circumstances of his family and the people for whom he was responsible, and had been impoverished by the Canadian colonial systems.

Justa was optimistic and believed a better future was attainable for the Dakelh people. He entered politics to fight against oppression, poverty and violence within the Dakelh Nation and advocated toward building cooperative relationships with non-Indigenous peoples. Over the past few months Justa served on the Traditional Governance Steering Committee for the Carrier Sekani First Nations as it begins its work to move forward the transformation of Dakelh governance.

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