

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

FOUNDING HEAD OFFICE
209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1
Tel: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319



VANCOUVER OFFICE
401 - 312 Main Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 2T2
Tel: 604-684-0231
Fax: 604-684-5726
1-800-793-9701
Email: ubcic@ubcic.bc.ca
Web: www.ubcic.bc.ca

Statement

June 23, 2020

UBCIC Remembers Carole Dawson

((X^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk^wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔ/seliłwitulh (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – June 23, 2020) It is with heavy hearts that the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) marks the loss of lifelong colleague and friend, Carole Dawson, who passed away on June 21, 2020 after contracting COVID-19. UBCIC mourns the loss of a unique and immensely kind-hearted leader whose lifelong fight for Indigenous Title and Rights, combined with her selflessness and care for others, inspires us to be and do better – to conduct ourselves with the same bravery, resilience, and conviction Carole possessed.

From 1988, Carole helped UBCIC fulfill its mandate and overcome numerous challenges. Working as UBCIC's Health Liaison Officer and later as UBCIC's Family, Children and Health Director, she played an integral role in improving both healthcare and child welfare for Indigenous families. Carole was also a champion in holding Canada accountable for the pervasive discrimination contributing to underfunded and inequitable Indigenous healthcare systems. A survivor of St. Michael's Residential School at Alert Bay, Carole overcame great trauma, violence, and loss to help and heal others as an addictions and sexual abuse counselor.

"Foremost, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to Carole's community, the Dzawada'enuxw Nation, and her family and loved ones. We have suffered an immeasurable loss – the loss of an Elder, a language speaker, an advocate, a mother, a healer, and a guide," stated Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of UBCIC. "To abruptly lose such a cherished life to COVID-19 is a devastating reminder that the pandemic is far from over and continues to be a threat to Indigenous health and welfare. We remember Carole and hope the Province takes every precaution to protect Indigenous lives and ensure the public is following the proper health protocols. With Carole's passing, we honour her immense work to improve the health outcomes of Indigenous peoples, and we pledge to continue her work in overcoming the challenges to comprehensive, culturally-appropriate Indigenous health care. Carole's contributions to UBCIC and her steadfast commitment to serving Indigenous children and families was always rooted in her

strong, proud ties to her culture and Kwakiutl traditions. She incorporated the generosity, strength, and values of her parents, Dave and Flora, into everything she did. Through her advocacy and work, she carried forth and contributed to a legacy of Indigenous activism and resilience, while never failing to put the needs of others first. Even when faced with adversity and setbacks in her own health, her love and care for others never diminished. UBCIC will always remember Carole as a force to be reckoned with – someone who never shied away from the truth and always spoke with great power and conviction in defense of our Title and Rights.”

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Media inquiries:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Union of BC Indian Chiefs: 250-490-5314

UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca