

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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News Release

June 18, 2021

UBCIC Statement of Condolence on the Passing of Leslie Pinder

((X^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), Sk^wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səilwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – June 18, 2021) It is with shock and profound sadness that the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) learned of the sudden passing of Leslie Pinder on June 12th. Leslie was a lifelong friend of UBCIC who made incredible strides for the recognition and respect of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous Rights across Turtle Island throughout her lifetime.

She worked at the UBCIC as in-house legal counsel beginning in 1978 under the leadership and direction of Grand Chief George Manuel. She accompanied a delegation of First Nations leaders to London as part of the legendary Constitution Express, where she applied her brilliant insight and creativity to oppose the lack of recognition of Indigenous rights in the patriation of the Canadian Constitution, and ensure the recognition of our existing Rights in Section 35. With the UBCIC's support she and her legal colleagues started the Mandell Pinder law firm in 1983, where she continued to stand side by side with First Nations to defend our inherent Title, Rights and Treaty Rights in Canadian courts and in government negotiations. She was instrumental in advancing First Nations rights in several landmark cases on fishing, taxation, and the recognition of our Title and jurisdiction in our territories.

Leslie was a beautiful soul who listened and acted with care, intelligence, and conviction as a trusted ally and tireless advocate for justice. Our archives are replete with evidence of her dedication and commitment over the years. She was a respectful and energetic presence at meetings of our Chiefs Council, always attentive when hearing about our experiences and the effects of Canadian legal systems on our lives, passionate when excoriating the actions of federal and provincial governments, and devoted to exploring all legal options and forging new paths. We send our deepest condolences to her family and wide circle of friends, which include the many members of our communities who had the great privilege to work with her and spend time in her company.

Media inquiries:

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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

For Leslie's obituary, please visit <https://vancouver.sunandprovince.remembering.ca/obituary/leslie-pinder-1082607597>