



## **NAFC 39<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting**

**July 13-16, 2010**

**Hinton Centre  
Hinton, Alberta**

### **SENATE REPORT**

Tansi, Bonjour, Ahneen, She'gon, Bojou, Good Day to you all!

The Senate gives greetings and many thanks to the Board, Staff and Members of the Hinton Friendship Centre Society for hosting this year's Annual General Meeting in one of Canada's most beautiful locations in Alberta. We also want to thank the Elders for their presence and guidance during this gathering.

Before we begin our annual report to the membership, we want to take time and acknowledge the passing of NAFC Life time member Tom Eagle on September 29, 2009. Tom was a very proud Ojibway man from Manitoba but spent most of his life living in Yellowknife, NWT. Spanning over 40 years, Tom was best known for his community work. He was responsible for the development of our Friendship Centres North of 60 and the northern Friendship Centre's Territorial office. His later years were spent entirely devoted to advocating for the rights of Aboriginal veterans. Tom is survived by his loving wife of 54 years – Muriel and their three daughters, two sons, ten grandchildren and six great grandchildren. For those of us, who had the honor of working with or knowing Tom, we will remember him for his story telling and need to fight for those who could not fight for themselves. He will be fondly remembered and forever missed.

On a happier note, we welcome Senator Myrtle Banfield from St. John's Newfoundland to the NAFC Senate. She has participated with us during our last Senate meeting and we are looking forward to sharing her wisdom in the future. Senator Banfield will be formally inducted into the Senate after this report.

The Senate also takes pleasure in announcing the appointment of Adeline Webber from Whitehorse, Yukon as the newest member to the NAFC Senate. Senator Webber will attend all Senate meetings until the 40<sup>th</sup> NAFC AGM where she will take part in a formal induction to the Senate.

Adeline was born and raised in Whitehorse, Yukon. She is a member of the Teslin Tlingit First Nation, Kukhiittan Clan and her Tlingit name is Kh'ayade. She is familiar with the Tlingit culture that was taught in the traditional way by her mother, aunts and clan mothers. She became involved in the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre (SJFC) many years ago as a volunteer and became a board member in 1989. After more than 15 years on the Board of Directors of the SJFC and having served on the Executive during the entire period, she retired in June 2004 and was appointed as an honorary lifetime member of the SJFC.

She continues to be interested and involved in the Centre, attends special gatherings and the AGM's whenever possible and more recently served as the Yukon representative to the NAFC Board of Directors. In addition to her dedication to the Friendship Centre Movement, Adeline continues to be actively engaged in a diversity of volunteer work both locally and nationally. Adeline has worked towards the recognition and acknowledgement of rights for First Nations women in the Yukon and Canada and has been a strong advocate of Aboriginal women's rights for over 30 years.

We are honored to have both Adeline and Myrtle sit as Senators.

Senate members participated this year at the President's and Coordinator's Meeting as well as all meetings of the Board of Directors in November 2009, February 2010 and May 2010, including the Friendship Centre Lobby Day on Parliament in November 2009. The Senate takes their responsibilities seriously and appreciates the opportunities to participate at these gatherings. In addition, we commend the work of Senator Rankin in his traditional work and teachings with the NAFC staff. We also commend Peter and the national office staff for moving in this traditional direction in such a good way .

The Senate would also like to congratulate the Youth in our Movement for taking the lead in their Curriculum Development project and their endeavors to record the history of the Friendship Centre Movement. Thank you for doing that good work. It is so important to those who are joining the Movement and who will form the future for us all.

At our last meeting held May 27-28, 2010, the Senate was given an opportunity to participate in a Talking Circle focusing on Truth and Reconciliation. It was a very strong experience for all of us. As a result of our event and our awareness of the needs in the communities, we urge the local Friendship Centres to provide support services and programs, no matter how small, to assist the survivors of residential schools and their children and grandchildren. We realize this is no easy task. However, it is an essential one if we are to become healthy, happy communities again. We see Friendship Centres as the key to initiatives in this area and hope that the lack of essential funding will not mean a reduction in the successful efforts of local Centres in this area of need. Please know the Senate will be available to you, if you choose to call upon us.

The NAFC Senate was also tasked with responding to a letter to the NAFC Board of Directors from the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre. The letter requested the NAFC Board to ensure that a formal amendment be brought before the AGM in July 2010 to amend the NAFC constitution to reflect the requirements that the Senate are working within the criteria of the NAFC constitution. The Skookum Jim Friendship Centre letter also suggested that the constitution should be changed to reflect that Senate members do not need to be Aboriginal as this is in line with the practice and requirements of Board appointments. They felt this would make board members available to be considered for the Senate which the constitution currently does not allow.

The Senate appreciates and acknowledges the work of all those who contribute to the Friendship Centre Movement but we feel the Senate should remain representative of Aboriginal people. There is a place for those dedicated individuals through the Lifetime Membership of NAFC. Some Provincial/Territorial Associations have named Lifetime Members to the NAFC in recognition of their work they have given at all three levels of the Friendship Centre Movement as the Senate seat in their respective regions was filled.

After much discussion, it was agreed that any nominees who are being recommended for Senate appointment should be Aboriginal.

As part of our work and to ensure clarity, the Senate discussed the following constitutional amendment:

#### Section 5

To be eligible as a Senate member the following criteria shall be considered for appointment:

(b) The individual must be able to demonstrate that he/she has contributed to the Friendship Centre Movement, **as a board member or employee**, at a local, provincial/territorial (**where they exist**) and national level.

It is our understanding that this proposed constitutional amendment was received within the prescribed time frames of the constitution and will be placed on our AGM agenda for discussion at this year's AGM.

We would like to thank the NAFC Board of Directors for sharing this letter with us and providing an opportunity for the Senate to discuss and respond to the request from the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre.

Some of you may recall that the Senate was tasked with undertaking a national visioning exercise on behalf of the Friendship Centre Movement to develop a vision statement. The Senate has been active, consistently revising feedback and has a strong statement which has been reflected in the NAFC Strategic Plan accepted by the NAFC Board of Directors Meeting at their May 26-27, 2010 meeting.

The Senate will continue to be active and supportive of the lobbying efforts for enhancements of the AFCP and continue to encourage all Friendship Centres to carry on lobbying activities. A constant presence is very important in this process. This was evident when Senators Rankin and White joined the NAFC team on the Lobby Day on the Hill. We found the experience to be effective and a positive way of connecting with and informing Members of Parliament about our Movement. Many MP's were familiar with Friendship Centres and the work we do and there were those hearing about us for the first time. It is important to the Senate to have a presence during lobbying activities as it shows parliamentarians that the history of our Movement is very much alive.

As Senators we meet many health challenges during the year. This year, a couple of our Senators faced some health issues and we want to acknowledge that and let them know we wish them well in this coming year. Our thoughts and prayers will be with them for a speedy and complete recovery.

Senator White sends her regrets for her absence at this AGM. She was extended an invitation by the Canadian Aboriginal Aids Network to join them as their Elder for the World Aids Conference being held in Vienna, Austria the same week as our national AGM. Her thoughts and good wishes for a great AGM are with you all.

We would like to acknowledge and give thanks to Peter Dinsdale, NAFC Executive Director, Vera Pawis Tabobondung, NAFC President and all the staff at the national office for their support.

The Senators acknowledge the hard work of the NAFC Board and Staff in carrying out the directives given through resolutions at last year's annual meeting. We commend you all on a job well done. We want to thank Mel Maracle for all her supportive work for the Senate and Vice President, Nelson Mayer who is also the Board's liaison to the Senate. Miigweech and thank you Mel and Nelson.

In addition, we want to thank the hard working and dedicated volunteers for their contributions to the Friendship Centre Movement.

All Our Relations

NAFC Senators

Roger Obonsawin  
Marge White  
Miriam YoungChief  
Mary Richard

Theresa Whiskeyjack  
Dominique Rankin  
Winston McLeod  
Helen Hudson-MacDonald

Ray Fox  
Myrtle Banfield