

It was sad news in Indian Country when we learned of the passing of Billy Frank Jr. of the Nisqually Tribe. Billy was a friend of all Tribes; he took on enormous challenges for the sake of all of us. He was successful in achieving many agreements between Tribes and others.

I will always remember Billy as he smiled and greeted me with hugs (as he did everyone he greeted) and when he came to visit our Restoration Celebration a couple of years ago.

Tribes lost a real champion for treaty rights. It will be difficult to fill his shoes.

Billy Frank, Jr. – 1931-2014

A Beloved Champion for Native Peoples and a Warrior for the Ages

From Richard Trudell and the American Indian Resources Institute

I wish we were managing thirty years before Judge Boldt issued his ruling in '74 [upholding tribal rights to manage fisheries]. I wish we had co-management then. We might have been able to use the treaties and our professionals back when we really needed it.

But we do have that decision and it gives us a chance. We're the advocates for the salmon, the animals, the birds, the water. We're the advocates for the food chain. We're an advocate for all of society. Tell them about our life. Put out the story of our lives and how we live with the land and how they're our neighbors. And how you have to respect your neighbors and work with your neighbors.

So what you do is, you do what you can in your lifetime. Then that'll go on to

another lifetime. Then another lifetime. Then another.

Billy Frank, Jr. (2000)

AIRI Remembers Billy Frank, Jr.

It is with unspeakable sadness that the American Indian Resources Institute (AIRI) bids goodbye to our great ally and dearest friend, Billy Frank, Jr.

Like all of Indian Country and beyond, we share the pain of losing one of the most inspired visionaries and dedicated activists of our time. For Indian Country, a key battle in the Civil Rights era of the '60s was fought in the Northwest around Indian fishing rights and Billy was in the eye of this storm for decades, fighting until the battle was won. His first arrest in the fishing struggle was at age 14 and he was arrested dozens of times more through his life.

In that epic battle, which resulted in the Boldt Decision, he won more than the victory for fishing rights, for he also fought for the Indians' right to live as Indians. He fought for us, for the fish, for the waters and for the natural world. He was fighting for a better world and a better place for us all.

A fierce fighter, Billy was also a compassionate warrior. He was not interested in destroying someone but rather in building something. He had the desire and ability to form alliances and some of his adversaries from the fishing wars ultimately became his supporters. Through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC), which he chaired, they worked over 30 years to build alliances in the restoration of the fish habitats so important to his beloved salmon.



File photo

Billy Frank Jr., Stanley Speaks, Delores Pigsley and John Echohawk at the Siletz Tribal Restoration Celebration in 2010

He was a bridge builder and networker, crisscrossing the country in frequent travels to Washington, D.C., extending himself to speak with other Native peoples waging similar struggles from Maine to Alaska to Hawaii.

His activism was soon to go international, for at the Tribal Leaders Forum meeting held recently in Hawaii, Nainoa Thompson, Native Hawaiian navigator and the president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, requested Billy to be present for the Hokule'a canoe's arrival in New Zealand as part of the M lama Honua, the Hokule'a's historic world voyage from 2013-2017.

We are grateful to have known Billy and to have traveled on the same road, seeking justice for Indian Country. Billy has been an ally and friend to AIRI for many years. He was recognized by AIRI with a Distinguished Achievement Award in the early '90s.

He was a dedicated participant in AIRI's Tribal Leaders Forums and in his presentations always encouraged and challenged Tribal leaders to fight the good fight to protect our nations and our treaty rights. Billy always said, "For our Indian people, the only retirement is when we meet the Creator. We've got to keep

working and meetings (forums) like this help get the job done."

The AIRI Tribal Leaders Forum Indian Water 2014, coming up May 28-29, is one that Billy urged us to convene. He was keen on attending and "firing up" the Tribes to address the looming water struggle, one that he has been actively involved with in the Northwest all his life. We plan to continue the effort with Billy as our inspiration.

In every generation, heroic individuals emerge who take on mythic proportions beyond their own lives, who embody the struggles of their time and whose quest for justice forever impacts all future generations and the world we all share. Billy Frank, Jr. was such a man.

It was truly a great privilege and an immense pleasure to know Billy. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to his family and his nation and share in this great loss.

Information on the May 11, 2014, services for Billy can be found on the NWIFC website (nwifc.org).

"For our Indian people, the only retirement is when we meet the Creator. We've got to keep working and meetings (forums) like this help get the job done."
Billy Frank, Jr.

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Deadline for the July issue is June 10.

Submission of articles and photos is encouraged.

Please see the Passages Policy on page 20 when submitting items for Passages.



Member of the Native American Journalists Association

Nuu-wee-ya' (our words)

Introduction to the Athabaskan language

Open to Tribal members of all ages

Siletz
Tribal Community Center
June 2 – 6-8 p.m.
July 7 – 6-8 p.m.

Eugene
Eugene Area Office
June 3 – 6-8 p.m.
July 8 – 6-8 p.m.

Portland
Portland Area Office
June 9 – 6-8 p.m.
July 14 – 6-8 p.m.

Salem
Salem Area Office
June 10 – 6-8 p.m.
July 15 – 6-8 p.m.

Classes begin with basic instruction and progress over the year. They also are a refresher course for more-advanced students. Come and join other members of your community and Tribe in learning to speak one of our ancient languages.

We also have equipment in the Cultural Department available for use in grinding and drilling shell or pine nuts or other applications. If you need to use the equipment, call the number below to set up an appointment.

For more information, contact Bud Lane at the Siletz Cultural Department at 541-444-8320 or 800-922-1399, ext. 1320; or email budl@ctsi.nsn.us.