



**YUKON
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News Release

**AFN Yukon Regional Office
Regional Chief Kluane Adamek**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Honouring the Life of Gus'Duteen - Elder Frances Woolsey

WHITEHORSE, YUKON – The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Yukon Region offers condolences to the family and friends of the late Elder Frances Woolsey (nee Clethero), Gus'Duteen of the Dakl'aweidi Clan. Frances was the matriarch of the Jenny LeBarge Family and was a respected Elder of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC). Frances passed on peacefully in late February – surrounded by family – and last week, loved ones gathered to honor and celebrate her life.

AFN Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek (Aagé) shared, "on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations, we join with the family and friends of Gus'Duteen to honour her life and leadership. We share in the grief and sadness of her loved ones, and we join in honouring the lifetime of accomplishments that she shared with us. Frances touched the lives of many, and she will be greatly missed by all who had the opportunity to know her.

Frances' childhood formed firm foundations for a full life committed to service and community, overcoming challenges and launching initiatives to build a better future for everyone. Her leadership always remained grounded in her traditional teachings and culture as she worked tirelessly on the advancement of First Nations' rights, all while proudly raising her six beloved children."

Frances believed fiercely in supporting women, youth, children and families, and was a remarkable leader with a life-long practice of contributing to a broad range of organizations and causes including the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, the Yukon Association for Non-Status Indians (YANSI), the Yukon United Way Board, the Yukon Wildlife and Renewable Resources Management Boards, the Yukon River Panel, the Yukon Hospital Corporation Board, the CYFN Health Commission, and her role as a founder of the Yukon Indian

Women's Association. She was actively involved in the TKC government and served as Chair of the TKC Elders Council for many years.

“Frances lived through – and contributed to – many major moments and milestones in our society as we know it,” explained Regional Chief Adamek. “She will be remembered for her respectful and direct nature, as well as the humility and wisdom that she embodied throughout her long life and varied career path. She gained widespread respect in the Yukon and beyond, working with people from all backgrounds and walks of life.”

Frances Woolsey was a Matriarch, Knowledge Keeper, and tireless advocate for young people and education. Throughout her life, she was recognized for her vast contributions and was awarded as a recipient of the Order of the Yukon and the AFN Yukon Region's Lifetime Achievement Award. Most recently, she saw the culmination of her hard work result in the establishment of T'äw Tà'är as a National Historic Site of Canada.

Regional Chief Adamek went on to say, “Gus'Duteen was a very special friend. This past week I have reflected on the meaningful time that I spent with her; listening and learning about the past while understanding how to navigate the present. I join her family and friends in honouring her and her tremendous life.

While Frances was the last of her siblings to leave us Earth-side, her life, leadership, and legacy continue on through her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and all whose lives she touched. I have no doubt that we will all continue to learn from her for generations to come.”

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Kluane Adamek

Regional Chief

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