



## PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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### **The Colville Tribes Grieves the Loss of Former Chairman Michael Finley**

**(Nespelem, WA)** — The Colville Tribes is saddened to announce the passing of former Chairman Michael Finley. The Lucy Covington Government Center will begin flying flags today at half-staff in his honor.

Michael Finley was a three-time Chairman of the Colville Tribes and his accomplishments were numerous. Mike presided over Colville's MOA in 2008 with the Bonneville Power Administration for acquisition and management of habitat for resident and anadromous fish. While Chairman, Mike served also as Chairman of the Inter-Tribal Monitoring Association for Indian Trust Funds. In 2012 the Tribes settled a breach of trust lawsuit with the federal government for \$193 million under Mike's leadership. He served as Chairman during the DNA testing that confirmed the Ancient One's genetic link to the modern Colville Tribes and he worked passionately for the return of the Ancient One. Mike testified before Congress on numerous occasions on behalf of the Colville Tribes as Chairman.

Michael Finley also distinguished himself outside of his service as Chairman of the Colville Tribes. He earned a BA in American Indian studies and history in 2003 and a Master's degree in history in 2005 from Eastern Washington University and served on the EWU Board of Trustees. He was a co-author of the book "Finding Chief Kamiakin: The Life and Legacy of a Northwest Patriot." He assisted with the Sinixt ethnoreport which informed the Colville Tribes' successful litigation of the *Desautel* case in the Canadian Supreme Court that re-affirmed the Sinixt as a First Nations people in Canada. Mike received numerous awards for his academic and professional achievements. Mike served as the First Vice President of the National Congress of American Indians.

Mike worked for the Tribes' History and Archaeology Department and was an outstanding researcher, often finding overlooked or new data while visiting museums and archives. Mike collaborated with scholars such as Richard Scheuerman and historians such as Richard Hart. He interviewed roughly 75 tribal elders to write several reports on traditional cultural properties. He contributed a chapter to *Kennewick Man: Perspectives on the Ancient One*. Michael also worked on archaeological surveys and excavations with a focus on the Upper Columbia River.

The Chairman of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Jarred-Michael Erickson, said, “Former Chairman Finley spent his life in service of the Colville people, both in preserving our history and in leading our way into the future. He leaves behind a family and many friends who love him. Mike will live on as part of the Colville tribal history he loved.”

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,263 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The twelve tribes which compose the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation include: ščəłámxəx<sup>w</sup> (deep water) or Chelan; walwáma (Wallowa people) or Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce; sǰ<sup>w</sup>yʔilp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šntiyátk<sup>w</sup>əx<sup>w</sup> (grass in the water) or Entiat; snʔáyckst (speckled fish) or Lakes; mətx<sup>w</sup>u (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxčənəx<sup>w</sup> (people living on the bank) or Moses-Columbia; nspilm (prairie) or Nespelem; uknaqin (seeing over the top) or Okanogan; palúšpam (people from Palouse) or Palus; sənpʔ<sup>w</sup>ilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnpəšq<sup>w</sup>áwsəx<sup>w</sup> (people in between) or Wenatchi.