



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

For Immediate Release
August 17, 2022

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The Colville Tribes Honors Lawney Reyes

(Nespelem, WA) — The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation honors Lawney Reyes upon his death on August 10, 2022 at the age of 91. The Native American artist, sculptor, interior designer, architect and writer was a longtime Seattle resident.

Reyes was the son of an immigrant Filipino father and a Sinixt mother. Throughout his work, Reyes was inspired by his mother’s tribal stories. Reyes’ mother, Mary Christian Hall Wong, was a fabled storyteller. After she was killed in a car crash on Memorial Day, 1978, Reyes devoured the taped interviews and diaries she left behind which preserved family and tribal history.

Reyes was perhaps best known for his book “White Grizzly Bear’s Legacy: Learning to Be Indian,” which documented his family saga and his tribe’s forgotten history. His third book, “B Street: The Notorious Playground of Coulee Dam,” combines his mother’s stories with his own childhood memories of the town in Inchelium where he grew up. “B Street” inspired the PBS documentary, “The Grand Coulee Dam.” At the time of his death, Reyes was working with International Community Health Services on a bronze cast of his iconic grizzly bear sculpture. It is set to be installed in 2024 as part of a permanent art collection in a new senior care facility on North Beacon Hill, Seattle.

Colville Business Council Chairman Jarred-Michael Erickson said today, “We always mourn the passing of an elder, and especially an elder who did so much to preserve and protect tribal history. We honor Lawney Reyes for his love of our people and our history.”

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,328 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: ščəlámxəx^w (deep water) or Chelan; walwáma (Wallowa people) or Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce; sǰ^wyǰilp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šntiyátk^wəx^w (grass in the water) or Entiat; snǰáyckst (speckled fish) or Lakes; mətx^wu (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxčənəx^w (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; sənɣ^wilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnpəšq^wáwsəx^w (people in between) or Wenatchi.