

First Nations Summit

STATEMENT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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First Nations Summit statement on the passing of respected Dakelh leader Justa Monk

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, BC— It is with great sadness that First Nations Summit leaders learned yesterday of the loss of prominent BC First Nations leader and former First Nations Summit Co-Chair, Justa Monk, who passed away on Wednesday morning.

Mr. Monk's death marks a great loss, not only for his own community of Tl'azt'en Nation, located in Tache, BC (40 km Northwest of Fort St. James), but the entire Dakelh (Carrier) Nation. He will be remembered as a respected indigenous leader in the many capacities he held over the past 50 plus years, including several terms as Chief of Tl'azt'en Nation, Tribal Chief and Vice-Tribal Chief of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council and two terms as Co-Chair of the First Nations Summit. He also served on numerous boards and committees over the past fifty years.

Mr. Monk, a survivor of the LeJac Indian Residential School, was the subject of a 1994 biography entitled *Justa: A First Nations Leader* by author Bridget Moran. He worked tirelessly to close the social and economic gaps faced by his people and was a deep advocate for Indigenous Title and Rights, the preservation of Indigenous Language and culture and preservation and protection of the Dakelh fishery.

Mr. Monk's timely observations and his keen sense of humour will be greatly missed. The First Nations Summit sends deepest condolences to the family of Justa Monk and the community members of Tl'azt'en Nation.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For further information:

Colin Braker, Communications Director, FNS, Phone: 604-926-9903

