



News Release

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The First Nations Leadership Council and Our Children Our Way Society Honour the Extraordinary Service of Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Member Edward Lustig

(xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓x̓ wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.)

The First Nations Leadership Council and the Our Children Our Way Society (OCOW) extend their sincere gratitude to Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) Member Edward Lustig following his resignation from the Tribunal panel overseeing the landmark First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle human rights case.

For more than a decade, Member Lustig played a central role in one of the most significant human rights proceedings in Canadian history.

Beginning in 2012, Member Lustig joined Tribunal Chair Sophie Marchildon and fellow panel member Réjean Bélanger in hearing evidence in the complaint brought by the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations. Following the passing of Member Bélanger in 2015, Member Lustig and Chair Marchildon continued the work, ultimately issuing the Tribunal's landmark 2016 decision, which found that Canada had discriminated against First Nations children through its inequitable funding of First Nations Child and Family Services and its failure to properly implement Jordan's Principle.

That decision fundamentally changed the landscape of First Nations children's rights in Canada. Over the following decade, Member Lustig and Chair Marchildon issued more than thirty compliance, remedial and procedural decisions, holding Canada accountable for implementing the Tribunal's orders and ensuring access to equitable service for First Nations children. Their decisions have advanced substantive equality, strengthened the implementation of Jordan's Principle, and affirmed that Canada must remedy longstanding inequities affecting First Nations children and families.

Throughout this process, the Tribunal consistently demonstrated that human rights orders must be meaningful, enforceable and centred on the rights of children. Member Lustig's careful legal reasoning, unwavering commitment to fairness, and respect for the evidence have contributed immeasurably to protecting the rights of First Nations children. Notably, the Tribunal's decisions have repeatedly withstood judicial review, reinforcing the strength of its findings and the importance of its work.

"Member Lustig devoted years of his professional life to ensuring that First Nations children received the justice they had been denied for generations," said **Mary Teegee, Chair of Our Children Our Way**. "His work helped to fulfill the promise of human rights for our children and established an enduring legacy that will continue to guide this journey. On behalf of Our Children Our Way, I extend our deepest appreciation for his dedication, integrity and steadfast commitment to justice."

"The Tribunal's decisions have fundamentally reshaped how Canada understands its obligations to First Nations children," said **BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee**. "Member Lustig helped ensure that the voices and experiences of First Nations children and families were reflected in decisions that have changed lives across the country. His leadership has strengthened the protection of children's human rights and challenged Canada to live up to its own legal and moral commitments. We offer our sincere thanks for his years of dedicated public service."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, stated: "I gladly and wholeheartedly acknowledge Panel Member Edward Lustig for his instrumental role in upholding the human right of First Nations children to grow up free from the Crown's discrimination. Member Lustig's contributions to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decisions in *Canada (Attorney General) v. First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada* over the past 14 years have helped hold Canada accountable. I extend my deep

gratitude for his dedication to furthering equality in services to First Nations children, youth, families and communities."

"In his fourteen years as a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Member, Edward Lustig played a crucial role in asserting and protecting First Nations' rights," declared **Laxele'wuts'aat Huy'wu'qw (Chief) Shana Thomas, First Nations Summit Political Executive**. "As part of the panel overseeing the First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle human rights case, Member Lustig helped ensure that First Nations children have access to the services to which they are entitled, now and into the future. His work follows in a legacy of intergenerational advocacy, combating systemic racism against our children and families. We thank him for his years of dedication and wish him continued health, happiness, and fulfillment."

OCOW and the FNLC remain committed to working alongside First Nations in B.C., the National Children's Chiefs Commission and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society to ensure that every First Nations child can grow up safe, healthy, connected to their families, cultures and Nations, and free from discrimination, while ensuring respect for the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations in B.C. in any reform related to services for First Nations children and families.

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC). <https://www.fnlc.ca/>

The Our Children Our Way Society represents the 24 Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies in British Columbia. We work to safeguard the best interests of Indigenous children. <https://ourchildrenourway.ca/>

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