



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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### **BCAFN MOURNS PASSING OF CREE ELDER NOEL STARBLANKET**

***(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – Apr. 17, 2019)*** – The British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) is mourning the loss of respected Cree Elder Noel Starblanket who passed away earlier this week. After many years of struggling with diabetes he finally lost his fight Monday morning at the Regina General Hospital in Saskatchewan.

“As a revered First Nations leader, who was also a pipe carrier, residential school survivor, mentor, innovator, and a role model, he lived a life of hope and forgiveness,” states Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “We look to Elders and leaders like him who hold a vast amount of expertise and knowledge and who pass on their values and positive messages. They guide us on the pathway to building trust and committing to the long road of reconciliation.”

At the age of 24 Noel Starblanket became the Chief of his community, the Star Blanket First Nation, and served as one of the youngest Chiefs in Canada. Five years later he was voted into the position of President of the National Indian Brotherhood, now known as the Assembly of First Nations. He served a second term from 1978 to 1980 and during this term his administration began reshaping the organization so that it would come under the control of an assembly of all the Chiefs in Canada. A new political body that began coming together for the first time. It was during this time that a resolute determination emerged to secure constitutional recognition of First Nations and Treaty Rights.

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