



**For immediate release
Wednesday, March 10, 2004**

RICHARDSON RESIGNS AS TREATY COMMISSION CHIEF

VANCOUVER—The Treaty Commission today announced the resignation of Miles Richardson as chief commissioner.

Richardson, who has held the top post since November 1998, informed the Treaty Commission he wants to pursue other opportunities. In parting, Richardson said he would continue to be an advocate for treaty making as the most constructive and effective approach to resolving the title dispute in British Columbia.

Commissioners will assume acting chief commissioner duties on a rotating basis, effective immediately, until a new chief commissioner is appointed by agreement of the First Nations Summit and governments of Canada and British Columbia. Commissioner Jody Wilson is currently serving as acting chief commissioner.

Richardson is a former President of the Council of Haida Nation and was a First Nations Summit appointee to the Treaty Commission before becoming chief commissioner. He served as a member of the First Nations Summit Task Group and the BC Claims Task Force, whose report and 19 recommendations are the blueprint for the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia.

Commissioner Jack Weisgerber, provincial aboriginal affairs minister when Richardson was appointed to the BC Claims Task Force in 1990, said, "Miles has played a major role in the development and implementation of the treaty process. His energy and enthusiasm have been key to moving treaty negotiations forward."

Acting Chief Commissioner Jody Wilson said, "Miles brought passion, commitment and leadership to the Treaty Commission. He has made a significant contribution to the BC treaty process from its inception."

Commissioner Wilf Adam, who has worked alongside Richardson since 1995, said, "There have been numerous times over the past 8-1/2 years at the Treaty Commission when I have appreciated Miles's guidance and counsel."

Commissioner Mike Harcourt said, "Miles has shown strong leadership in bringing about the changes that are needed to conclude treaties, including implementing the recommendations that resulted from the Treaty Commission's review of 10 years of treaty making in 2001."

Richardson got his political training while protecting his Haida homeland from resource extraction and in forming broad alliances with interest groups to help his people gain

support among federal and provincial politicians. His courage and conviction are captured in news camera footage of the young Haida leader staring down angry loggers on a Queen Charlotte Island logging road.

Against the odds and at great personal risk, the young Richardson led the Haida - supported by environmentalists - in successfully convincing the federal and British Columbia governments to designate Gwaii Hanaas as Canada's first national park reserve and a Haida heritage site and to name the Haida and Canada co-managers.

In March 2000, Richardson received a national Aboriginal Achievement Award for Environment for his leadership role in the Gwaii Hanaas designation. In May 2000, he received a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Victoria for Public Service. In 2002, Richardson was awarded The Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for having made a significant contribution to Canada, to his community and to his fellow Canadians.

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